



SAVAGE TALES of Horror



3

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of Horror

Volume 3

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ISLE OF DEATH

By Matt Schorr

The year is 1942. America has officially entered World War II, and the Pacific Theater campaign is in full force. The heroes are a flight crew aboard a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress delivering equipment supplies across the ocean by night. The plane comes under enemy fire, and both engines suffer extensive damage, forcing the pilots to make an emergency landing on a remote, uncharted island.

The plane crashes on the beach and skids for several hundred feet before coming to a stop. Everyone aboard survives relatively unharmed, just dazed and bruised, but the plane is unsalvageable.

The crew stumbles out of the wreckage and, while getting their bearings and gathering supplies, is besieged by a group of zombieified soldiers. After dispatching the creatures, the crew determines they have no way to call for help and a very limited amount of supplies, so they venture into the unknown jungle.

The heroes discover an enormous compound surrounded by barbed wire and guarded by more zombie-like soldiers. Sneaking inside, the crew finds a cabin housing several prisoners of war from various countries.

Call to Action

This adventure is a natural fit for the *Weird War II* setting book, available at www.peginc.com. There are no changes needed to use this adventure in that setting.

A prisoner informs the crew of the hell in which they now find themselves. This compound is under the supervision of Viktor Strauss, a researcher who heads up one of the Third Reich's top-secret special projects divisions. Under direct orders from the Führer, Strauss is attempting to develop a breed of *Übermensch*, or "super soldiers." The zombieified creations were his earliest attempt, making use of dead prisoners.

To escape the island, the crew must locate a means of transmitting a call for help back to America and return to the beach. Unfortunately, the only structure housing any transmission equipment is the main building at the center of the compound, where Strauss conducts all of his macabre experiments.

The prisoners beg to help them, offering to do whatever it takes to escape the island. The crew must decide whether or not to take the prisoners, but with or without the prisoners' help, the soldiers have no choice but to face the maniacal Strauss and his army of deadly creations.

Will the soldiers put a stop to Strauss and escape the hellish island...or will they become part of his grotesque army?

SETTING RULES

Use these Setting Rules from *Savage Worlds* when running *Isle of Death*:

- Blood & Guts
- Fanatics
- Joker's Wild

CHARACTERS

The heroes are all well-trained soldiers looking to complete a mundane transport mission. Tell the players only that it's after sundown, and they're flying under cover of darkness to deliver supplies for equipment maintenance.

Don't tell them the heroes will battle zombified soldiers and genetic mutations in the jungle! Finding a way to deal with and survive their hellish surroundings is the biggest part of the challenge.

Otherwise, the group may make their characters however they wish, with only the following exceptions:

- The following Edges are prohibited: All Arcane Backgrounds and Edges that require them, including Arcane Resistance, Champion, Holy/Unholy Warrior, Connections, Beast Bond, Beast Master, Noble, and Rich.

TWISTED NAZI GENIUS

Viktor Strauss rose quietly through the ranks of the Third Reich. As a man with very little charisma, most of his colleagues paid him little attention. He was a diminutive fellow with puffy cheeks, beady eyes, and a receding hairline.

Many referred to him as "der Spitzel (The Mole)," though they rarely uttered it in Strauss'

presence. He hated the nickname and would often fly into a violent rage whenever he heard it. Unfortunately, his tiny stature and lack of any upper body strength made these rages little more than amusing to anyone who saw them.

However, as World War II grew hot, and Germany's list of adversaries increased, the Führer began looking for alternative measures to crush his enemies. It was then he discovered Strauss' scientific efforts. Despite not having the respect of his colleagues, he'd made groundbreaking achievements in the areas of gene splicing and the reanimation of dead tissue.

His earliest efforts involved gathering the bodies of slain prisoners and reanimating them. These mindless drones follow his every command without question and can only be killed by damage to the head. Despite their limited mental capacities, these minions retain their previous skills as trained marksmen, making them deadly obstacles for even the most skilled soldier.

After perfecting the process of reanimating dead tissue and programming them to follow orders without question, Strauss moved on to genetic engineering. After experimenting on several unlucky test subjects, he developed a means for creating hybrid creatures that possessed desired qualities of both man and animal.

In our story, Strauss has been granted an entire island facility to conduct his experiments and perfect the ultimate weapon against America, Britain, and their allies—the *Übermensch*.

DOGFIGHT

The adventure opens with the crew traveling across the Pacific Ocean on a supply run for the Allied Forces. The aircraft is primarily a transport vehicle, but it isn't defenseless. It has its set of standard military guns at the ready should it encounter enemy fire while deployed.

Typically, these aren't needed for a standard delivery mission, but tonight is an unfortunate exception. The first half of the flight is uneventful, with most of the crew doing little but watching the ocean.

Then, everything changes.

Four enemy aircraft—Messerschmitt Bf 109's—with Nazi swastikas appear on the horizon. The crew has little time to react before the fighter planes open fire.

The following battle uses the Dogfight Chase rules and the duration is up to the Game Master, but this is a battle the crew cannot win. The crew can shoot down one or more of the enemy aircraft—and win an extra Benny for each one destroyed—but their own plane's engines sustain heavy damage in the firefight and it is forced to make an emergency crash landing.

Whatever enemy fighters remain airborne veer off and leave the crew to their fate, and the crew descends toward the ocean. Luckily, an island appears just below them, and the pilots can steer toward the land.

The Game Master may add additional crew members to the plane, but they do not survive the crash. Only the players emerge alive.

Weapons and Gear

Each of the heroes has the following standard issue gear:

- Army Fatigues
- Colt 1911 (.45) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 1) and one spare clip
- Helmet (+4, 50% vs head shots)

There is additional gear on the dead crewmembers or located in compartments throughout the plane. If the crew is pressed for time (Game Master's call), it requires a successful Notice roll to locate the following items:

- 5 × Knives (Str+d4)
- 2 × Colt 1911 (.45) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, Shots 7, AP 1)
- 1 Thompson SMG (.45) (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 3, Shots 30, AP 1, Auto, Min Str d6), with a spare magazine
- 2 × M1 Carbine (.30) (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, Shots 15, Semi-Auto), each with a spare magazine.
- C-Rations (10 meals; keeps 1 week)
- Medical Kit

Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress

The Flying Fortress is a standard transport plane used by the military for supply runs and combat missions. It's a heavily armored aircraft armed with guns and, if needed, bombs.

Huge Vehicle: Acc/TS 10/126, Toughness 17 (2), Crew 2+8

Weapons:

- Twin-Linked.50 cal Machine Gun nose
- Twin-Linked.50 Machine Gun top turret
- Twin-Linked. 50 Machine Gun ball turret,
- .50 Machine Gun

Messerschmitt Bf 109 (4)

The Messerschmitt was designed by Willy Messerschmitt and Robert Lusser. It was originally designed as an interceptor, although due to its effectiveness in the field, it has become used for various other missions as well.

Medium Vehicle: Acc/Ts 20/172, Toughness 14 (2), Crew 1

Weapons:

- 2 × Quad-Linked.50 Machine Gun

CRASH LANDING

As the plane comes hurtling toward the island, the pilots may want to engage the landing gear. Unfortunately, this has sustained heavy damage, and is inoperable. They're forced to belly land the aircraft, which ultimately places them on the beach.

Attempting to call for help as they descend results in nothing but static on the radio. They can use the time they have before impact to gather supplies.

The crash renders the plane useless. Even if the crew had the benefit of a runway, the plane is never going to be air-worthy again. The engines are destroyed, the frame is irreparably damaged, and the wings have twisted and bent in awkward angles.

The interior of the plane is dark, save the limited illumination offered by emergency lights positioned at various points around the craft's interior. Several small fires have erupted.

Suddenly, the crew hears something banging on the walls outside accompanied by dull, throaty groans. The banging and groans increase in number, suggesting there are several things outside striking the plane. They almost sound like people, but there's something eerily inhuman about their voices.

Although the aircraft has been irreparably damaged and appears to be deteriorating further, the crewmembers have time to further check on their surroundings and each other before exiting.

Six grotesque creatures that resemble dead and rotting corpses are outside the plane. All six wear tattered soldier fatigues, and are armed with German Luger handguns.

- **Zombie Soldiers (6):** See page 19.

Entering the Nightmare

With the defeat of the zombie soldiers, the crew must decide what to do next. They can gather weapons from their fallen enemies, but if they remain where they are too long, four more Zombie Soldiers attack them. The Game Master should try and urge the players to make a decision quickly by alerting them to throaty groans in the distance approaching.

The crew can explore the island's beach exterior, but they only uncover more beachfront (and perhaps more Zombie Soldiers). They'll have to venture into the island's jungle interior to find the stronghold of Viktor Strauss—a series of single-story buildings surrounded by barbed wire. If the soldiers are reluctant to leave the airplane, a cleared trail—obviously made by people—might entice them inland.

CLOAK AND DAGGER

Zombie Soldiers guard the stronghold. Four stand guard at the main entrance, and two others patrol the exterior. The crew can either face the soldiers at the entrance or attempt to sneak past the pair patrolling outside. They'll need to score a successful Stealth roll to avoid being seen, plus a Climbing roll with a -2 modifier to ascend the barbwire fence without getting caught.

Pairs of Nazi Officers—not zombies—patrol the stronghold's interior. The Game Master determines how often the crew encounters these. The crew must make a successful Stealth roll at each encounter to avoid detection. Unless an alarm sounded from one of the Zombie Soldiers, consider the Nazi Officers as inactive.

Most of the buildings are dark and locked down for the night. However, one shows signs of life. It's a small cabin with a single entrance and window which houses war prisoners from various countries gathered by Strauss for experimentation.

The entrance to the cabin is locked from the outside. The crew can open the lock with a successful Lockpicking roll. Failing that, they'll need to destroy the lock to gain entry... which is likely to draw attention from any Nazi Officers or Zombie Soldiers who may be nearby.

Once inside, the prisoners gather around the crew. With typical military bearing, they demand to know the crew's origins and how they came to be on the island. However, they soon warm up to them as a possible way out of this nightmare, and proceed to fill the crew in on Viktor Strauss, his stronghold and the nightmares it holds.

- **Nazi Officers:** See page 17.

PRISONERS OF WAR

The cabin's interior is sparse. Two rows of bunk beds line the walls, leaving a narrow walkway between them. The beds each have a single white sheet and pillow.

The prisoners inside wear gray prison uniforms. Although slightly malnourished, they appear relatively healthy, save a few bruises and black eyes here and there. Strauss and his minions have intentionally kept them weak to prevent escape attempts. Whatever food provided for the prisoners has only been enough to sustain them.

One of the prisoners, Adrien Malveaux, makes introductions and tells the crew they were captured and left in this hellhole to be lab rats for Strauss. Several others have already been taken, he says, and haven't returned. The remaining prisoners can only speculate what happened to them.

Adrien also tells the crew about the Zombie Soldiers, who were previously prisoners of war who had been executed. Afterward, Adrien says, the bodies were delivered to Strauss, who reanimated them and trained them to serve as unquestioning soldiers.

The prisoners ask the crew to take them, offering to help in any way they can to escape this place.

The Prisoners

Adrien Malveaux: A sergeant in France's National Gendarmerie captured nearly a year ago. He's been imprisoned the longest and serves as the de facto leader of the prisoners. He has a distinctive scar on his left cheek where he got into a knife fight with his captors. Malveaux was captured, but several Nazis suffered taking him. He's up for a fight, but his time in prison has weakened him.

Christopher Tennant: An officer in Great Britain's Royal Navy who was near the end of his service and about to return home when he was captured. He's been on the island for six months now, and he's itching for the chance to fight his way out.

Sebastian Taylor: A captain in the Australian Defense Force. He's been imprisoned for the shortest time—just two months—but he's every bit as eager to escape as the others.

Pyotr Limonov: A pilot in the Soviet Air Force who was shot down eight months ago much like the crew. He was nearly killed by Zombie Soldiers, but Strauss was accompanying them at the time and ordered Limonov to be captured. Strauss called him "a fresh victim in our growing army of the undead." Eight months of imprisonment have weakened him, but he's still eager to fight for his freedom.

All the prisoners have the following stats:

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Anemic

Edges: —

Gear: Prison uniform.

they can. The prisoners are their one and only source of information about the complex and their captors.

If the crew asks about the complex, Adrien takes the lead in the descriptions:

"There are other cabins like ours. They're used as residence halls by the Nazi Officers. You'll want to avoid these, if you can. The day shift officers are probably bedding down for the night, but they all sleep with guns under their pillows.

"Those Zombie Soldiers also have their own cabins, and you'll REALLY want to avoid those. They're fed right about this time. I don't know exactly what they feed those things, but it looks and smells like chopped up roadkill. And when those things start eating, they act like wild animals."

If the crew presses for further details on this, Pyotr speaks up:

"He's right. Those things don't usually try eating other people, but if you interrupt them while they're eating, they're likely to assume you're part of the meal."

If asked how to call for help, Adrien takes the lead again:

"The only way to contact anyone off the island is by using the radio equipment stored in the main laboratory. That's located in the center of this facility. They use it to report back to Germany and request supplies. And more prisoners.

"You'll need to find a way inside the laboratory and gain access to the radio equipment. But be careful. It's heavily guarded, and there are more than just Nazi Officers and Zombie Soldiers inside."

Should the crew ask what they can expect to find inside, Christopher, speaks up:

"Strauss is obsessed with developing the Übermensch for Hitler.

"The zombies outside were just his first effort. The only reason he keeps

ONE WAY OUT

Whether or not the crew accepts them into their group, the prisoners are ready to tell them about the stronghold and its layout. The Game Master should prompt the crew—either directly or as one of the prisoners—to ask as much as

making them is because they make nice guards, and they're cheap. They stink like a dead horse's arse, though, and they're only good for a year or so before necrosis makes them useless. The bloody things keep rotting even though they've been brought back to life. Sooner or later, they just fall apart.

"Strauss has been working day and night inside that lab developing new breeds of human, finding ways to enhance their strengths and reduce their weaknesses.

"There's no telling what's wandering those halls."

If the crew asks about Viktor Strauss, Adrien says:

"He's a madman. Unfortunately, he's also a genius. He served Hitler for years, proving himself as a scientist and a valuable resource. He's a top-ranking official in the Reich's biological weapons division, and if he continues his work, there's a very good chance the Allied Forces will fall."

COVERT OPS

With or without the prisoners, the crew must sneak to the main laboratory complex. They need to lie low and sneak past as many Nazi Officers roaming the stronghold as they can. After all, attracting any unwanted attention to themselves could bring more Nazi Officers or Zombie Soldiers chasing after them.

From this point on, the adventure is like a covert mission and relies heavily on the tension of hiding and doing everything possible to avoid detection. Such a task is already a challenge, but it's all the more challenging if the crew bring along the prisoners.

Finding the lab requires the characters to carefully navigate the compound and is handled in a similar manner to a Dramatic Task. Each round covers fifteen minutes of investigating and sneaking around the complex. The group's leader makes a Smarts or Stealth roll (whichever is lower) at -2 and the others may assist using cooperative rolls (see *Savage Worlds*). With a success and each raise, the group gains a token. Once the team acquires five tokens the crew finds its way to

None of the Prisoners Survive!

Suspense and terror are hallmarks of the horror genre—and it is far easier to kill off the sympathetic prisoners than your heroes.

Although the prisoners can lend a hand to the crew in the early stages, and players can use them as extras during that time, once they enter the main lab their lives become forfeit. One by one, each prisoner should be killed off in spectacularly gruesome ways by the various creations they encounter. The first unfortunate victim should be slain by the Human Crocodile Hybrid who guards the entrance to Strauss' underground lair. The second should be killed by the Bruiser in the Main Labs, the Green Spawn in the Holding Cells, or the Uber-Zombie in the Offices. Viktor Strauss himself finishes off the last two in the final confrontation.

The Game Master should take note of any prisoner the crew develops a bond with, and save that person's death for the end. Make it fast, make it shocking, and leave the survivors feeling more and more isolated and in increased danger.

the main lab and enters what promises to be a macabre house of horrors. Proceed to **The Stronghold of Viktor Strauss**. If they fail, Zombie Soldiers send up the alarm—they've been spotted!

Also, each round the heroes move through the compound, the Game Master draws a card from the Action Deck. With a Black Face Card the team encounters a group of zombified soldiers. The characters may try to avoid the patrol by making an opposed Stealth roll vs. the soldiers' Notice. Any prisoners freed by the heroes who are in tow make a group Stealth roll (see **Group Rolls** in *Savage Worlds*). With a success the heroes avoid detection and continue on. Anyone failing attracts the attention of the zombified soldiers who attack. The patrol starts at 2d6" away from a detected character. Combat lasting more than five rounds allows one of the soldiers to raise an alarm summoning another patrol, which arrives in 1d6 rounds. With the base

on alert, it becomes difficult to sneak around. The Smarts or Stealth are made at -4 and the crew encounters zombified soldiers on any Black Card drawn.

To help build the suspense and reveal the true nature of the compound, when the characters look for a place to duck out of sight, let them know there are numerous cabins to hide behind. Choosing to hide by one, they happen to be near a cabin housing zombified soldiers enjoying their nightly meal. Describe hideous noises emanating from within—hungry growls, wet slurping, disgusting splattering sounds, etc.

- **Zombified Soldier (4):** See page 19.

THE STRONGHOLD OF VIKTOR STRAUSS

From the outside, the main laboratory facility located in the center of the stronghold appears to be a small, single story building not much larger than the residence halls surrounding it. However, the crew discovers

a massive underground fortress when they venture inside.

The entire floor level portion of the building is a single room with an elevator at the end. A single button calls the elevator, and once inside, the crew sees only two buttons: GROUND LEVEL and SUBTERRANEAN LEVEL.

Pressing the second button causes the elevator to descend deep underground. As they journey down, the crew hears bizarre, unearthly sounds—likely experiments by Strauss that went well...or didn't.

It takes the elevator a long time to reach its destination, giving the impression the crew journey into hell itself. When the doors finally open, they see a long hall leading to a massive door. That door, however, is blocked by one of Strauss' nastiest creations—a human crocodile hybrid!

The creature sees them when the elevator door opens, and it immediately flies into a murderous rage. It opens its massive jaws and unleashes a loud, vicious hiss that transforms into an unearthly moan.

The human crocodile hybrid charges and the crew must kill the creature to progress further—and to survive!



- **Human Crocodile Hybrid:** See page 17.

THREE-WAY JUNCTION

Past the massive door is an intersection of three hallways. For the moment, no enemies are present (unless the Game Master just wants to amp up the difficulty), but the crew shouldn't linger.

A sign on the wall indicates where each of the halls lead: **MAIN LABS**, **HOLDING CELLS**, and **OFFICES**. Although each path leads the crew on its own distinct adventure, all three ultimately lead to **COMMUNICATIONS**—where Viktor Strauss is waiting.

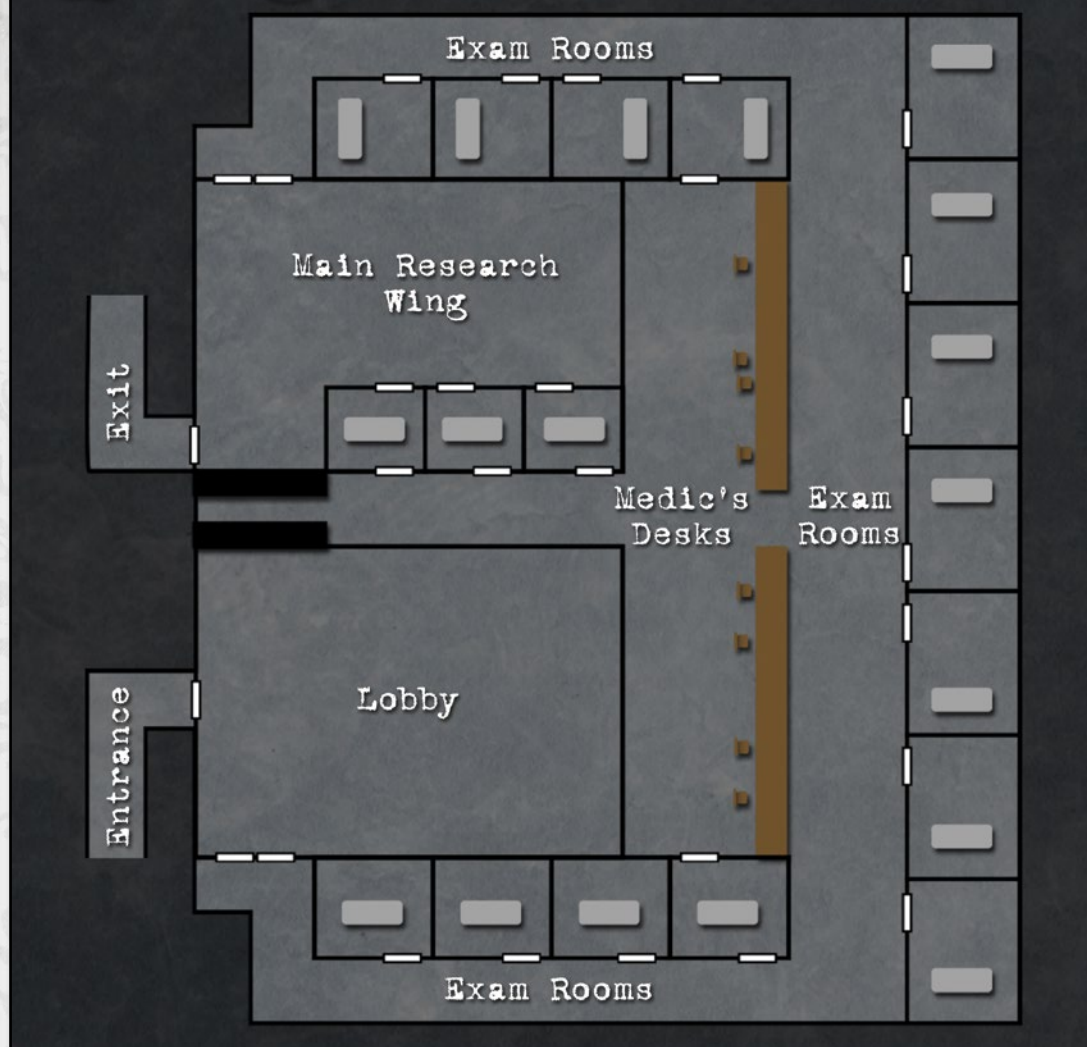
MAIN LABS

The Main Labs are where Strauss and his fellow scientists conduct all their macabre experiments. The laboratory complex consists of a series of interconnecting hallways lined with doors leading to what resemble hospital rooms—however, the unlucky tenants of these rooms are strapped to their beds and forced to undergo various nasty procedures.

Being freshly built, the halls are all in pristine condition. The floors almost sparkle and there's not a trace of dirt anywhere on the walls, which are devoid of color or decoration. The entire area feels sterile and claustrophobic.



Main Labs



Occasionally, the crew sees a streak of blood smeared across a window leading to one of the rooms. Although typically used for experimentation, these rooms are all empty at the moment. All the crew finds in any of them are empty beds with straps for fastening down unfortunate test subjects and scalpels that can be used as melee weapons (treat as a dagger).

The crew encounters various Nazi scientists working for Viktor Strauss as they make their way through the complex, either roaming the hall or exiting one of the many rooms. The scientists emerge from every third or fourth exam room the crew passes, and two sit at each medic's desk (see map). With no hiding places, the crew needs to dispatch these enemies.

Eventually, the crew should find a set of massive, stainless steel double doors that lead directly into the heart of the laboratory complex: a large room connected to several smaller rooms of varying size. The main room is filled with gurneys, IV drips, electrical monitors, and four Nazi Scientists working intently on several unlucky victims. The exit is at the far end.

Upon seeing the crew enter, one of the scientists yells, "*Eindringlingen!*" (*Trespassers!*)

All four step back from their work and regard the crew warily. Their victims appear to still be alive, but their movements are weak and sluggish. All of them are seriously wounded and on the brink of death. There is nothing the crew can do for them.

One Nazi Scientist steps forward and addresses the crew in English:

"Who are you? How have you come here?"

The length of the conversation and how it plays out is up to the crew and the Game Master. The Nazi Scientists meet any questions about themselves or the facility—or demands from the crew—with smug amusement. Any and all threats against them are virtually ignored or laughed off.

The conversation always ends with the Nazi Scientist addressing the crew (or another if the crew takes the initiative and kills him) yelling *"Achtung!"*

Moments later, one of the doors to a side room near the exit bursts open, and a massive, hulking brute—a.k.a "Bruiser"—stomps into the room. The Nazi Scientists flee through the exit, leaving the crew to contend with this deadly monstrosity.

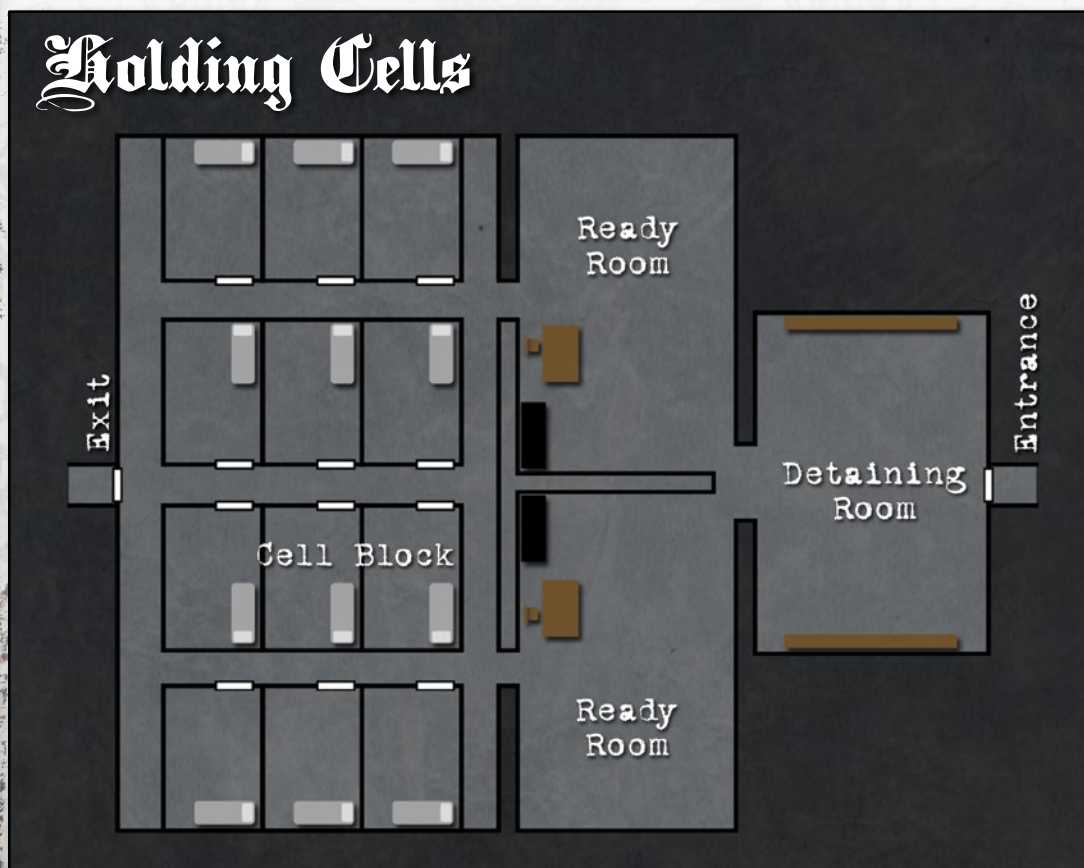
- **Nazi Scientist (4):** See page 18.
- **Bruiser:** See page 16.

HOLDING CELLS

The Holding Cells house Strauss' unfortunate victims in their final moments before undergoing experimentation. They resemble old-fashioned jail cells found in the back of police stations: a series of large cages built with stainless steel bars. Some have benches inside, others don't.

Occasionally, subjects are returned to the cells in between procedures. Several unlucky souls sit in various cells when the crew enters. None of them react to the crew's arrival, instead remaining closed off in their own personal hells.

- One man has gauze wrapped around his eyes, mouth, and fingers, and rests on all fours in the floor. He doesn't respond to any attempts to engage him. Rather, he, crawls face-first into the corner of his cell and remains there. He makes no sound and rocks slowly from side to side.
- Another lies across the floor and grips the bars with both hands. His lips are



Offices



curled back into a permanent snarl, and his bloody teeth chatter endlessly. His eyes are wide and frantic, resembling a rabid wild animal.

- A third man is curled into a fetal position on a bench in his cell. His skin is dark purple, and his veins—dark black—are visible. His flesh is damp and spongy, and his eyes are bloodshot red. Like his cellmates, he doesn't respond to the crew. He remains on his side with his arms around his knees whispering unintelligibly to himself. Occasionally, his voice rises to a soft whimper, but nothing more.

The Game Master is welcome to add his own unfortunate victims to other cells, depending on how horrifying and macabre he wants the crew's journey to be.

Nazi Officers guard the prisoners, and the crew encounters two in the Detaining Room, three in either Ready Room, and two in between each row of cells in the Cell Block. Unlike Nazi Scientists, the officers are not much for conversation of any sort and attack any intruders on sight. The crew must dispatch these soldiers quickly and quietly. Otherwise, they need to make a successful Stealth roll to

prevent other Nazi Officers from investigating. If an alarm was raised at any point and at the Game Master's discretion, these officers are on the alert.

The exit is located at the end of the winding hall, and it's guarded by another of Strauss' deadly creations—the Green Spawn.

- **Green Spawn:** See page 17.

OFFICES

The Offices house the bookkeeping wing of Strauss' operation. Although the facility's dirty work is typically reserved for the Main Labs and Holding Cells, the Offices are not without their own set of dangerous obstacles.

The offices are laid out much like a room in any office building: a large room filled with cubicles and desks for the lowly workers and doors leading to private offices reserved for the higher ups. Most of the office workers have gone home for the night, but the area is still far from deserted. Several file clerks are still hard at work on typewriters documenting a seemingly endless amount of paperwork. Five are seated at various desks throughout the main room.

These file clerks possess neither the fighting prowess of Nazi officers nor the fanatical loyalty of Nazi scientists. Their work is dull and unexciting, and the only feedback they get is most often criticism over not working hard or fast enough. They're unarmed, making them far more likely to surrender rather than fight.

The crew should treat these lowly office minions with caution, however, as one or more of them call for help if given the opportunity.

The private offices also house one or two office managers working late. Unlike their low-ranking office colleagues, office managers have a sense of loyalty to Strauss and his work (although not quite as strong as Nazi scientists), which was crucial to earning their promotions. As such, these pose a more significant threat to the crew as they encounter them.

The file clerks all cower behind their desks as the crew enters the room, but the office managers are not so quick to surrender. One Office Manager steps forward to speak to the intruders in English:

"Who are you people? What are you doing here?"

The length of the conversation and how it plays out is up to the crew and the Game Master.

The file clerks are little help, remaining behind their desks and whimpering. Any attempts to get them talking are useless. The most the crew can get from them are pleas to spare their lives in their native German.

The office managers are more open to conversation, but not much. They meet any questions or demands with defiance, insisting the crew has no chancing of escaping this place alive. They try to reason with the men, urging them to give up and allow themselves to be taken prisoner. "Otherwise, you will most certainly perish," they say.

The conversation ends abruptly when the exit doors swing open and another of Strauss' creations enters the room—the Über-Zombie. (This happens sooner if the crew decides to kill anyone in the room, as the monster investigates the noise.)

The office managers duck for cover in the offices. The file clerks have no such option—remaining under their desks as the monstrosity enters the room. This makes them targets for the Über-Zombie just as much as the crew, as it has no understanding of "friendly fire" or collateral damage.

The crew can either try to protect these poor, helpless souls or take advantage of them as handy decoys.

- **File Clerks (14):** See page 17.
- **Office Managers (2):** See page 18.
- **Über-Zombie:** See page 19.

VIKTOR'S OFFICE

All three paths—the Main Labs, the Holding Cells, and the Offices—ultimately converge at a single hallway. Whichever path the players choose, they always end up here.

The junction displays two signs. One says "COMMUNICATIONS." The other says "VIKTOR STRAUSS." Both can only be reached by following the hallway ahead.

The hall is long and dark. Several overhead lights flicker, while others remain out completely. Shadows dance crazily on the walls, and the crew has a hard time seeing very far in front of them.

Whether the hall is deserted or filled with enemies is up to the Game Master. The crew can wander through the passageway encountering nothing but fear and claustrophobia, or they can meet various minions of Viktor Strauss. Zombie soldiers, Nazi officers and Nazi scientists can all roam the hall at the Game Master's discretion.

The hall eventually turns right. A heavy door labeled "COMMUNICATIONS" stands around the corner. Unfortunately for the crew, it's locked. The door is built from thick steel, and no amount of effort on the crew's part forces it open. They're welcome to try, but they'll only end up with sore shoulders or feet or fists for their efforts. They have no choice to move forward and hope there's a key in Strauss' office.

Past the communications door, the hall continues on quite a bit further before making a left turn. Here, the hall ends at a single door. A sign next to door declares who this office belongs to — "VIKTOR STRAUSS."

The door is unlocked.

THE FINAL SHOWDOWN

Viktor Strauss' office doubles as a private laboratory for the maniacal scientist, and it is enormous. A massive black marble desk rests



in the center of the room, with stacks of neatly organized papers lining the edges. In fact, the pages are so well organized they resemble small towers, as if they were stacked by a machine.

Two medical beds stand on either side of the desk. One is empty. The other is occupied by the last prisoner to be killed. The Game Master needs to take note of who that is. (If the crew opted out of including the prisoners in their escape, the Game Master can select whichever prisoner she likes.)

Strauss, the mad genius himself, stands over the fallen prisoner. He holds a syringe in his hand and is about to administer it when the crew enters the room. He looks up from his "patient," grins at the intruders and speaks in accented English.

"I've been waiting for you, gentlemen. I was beginning to think you'd never get here."

The crew can engage in as much conversation with Strauss as they like. The psychotic scientist is more than willing to boast about his accomplishments and reveal his master plan.

Strauss boasts to the crew that, after years of research, he has finally uncovered the secret of the Übermensch! He secretly administered injections to himself for weeks, using his body as a guinea pig to accomplish his ultimate goal. Those injections, however, were only supplements preparing his body for the final dose.

That dose rests on Strauss' desk in a prepared syringe.

Unfortunately, moving to it prompts Strauss and the Reanimated Dead Prisoner to attack.

• **Reanimatd Prisoner:** See page 18.

• **Viktor Strauss:** See page 18.

THE ÜBERMENSCH

The crew may think defeating Strauss means they've won. Sadly, they're wrong.

The deranged doctor uses the last of his strength to reach the syringe on his desk and inject himself with the final dose (If the crew managed to keep him away from it he has another hidden nearby). He manages a final, maniacal laugh before falling behind the desk and mutating out of the crew's sight. All they hear are the sounds of fabric and flesh ripping and tearing.

Eventually, the sounds cease, and heavy silence looms over the room.

Then, Strauss stands again to face his adversaries. His lab coat has lost its sleeves where Strauss' shoulders and arms expanded to monstrous size, and his once hunched, pathetic shoulders are now massively broad. The doctor's legs have also increased in size, leaving his pants torn and reduced to a frayed pair of shorts. His button-up shirt and tie are shredded and unrecognizable.

Adding to Strauss' intimidating new appearance, his hands have also increased to monstrous size, with long and bony claws extending from each finger.

The creature opens its mouth to speak, and although its voice is guttural and slurred, there is no mistaking its words:

*"Behold the Übermensch!
Prepare to die!"*

☠ **Übermensch:** See page 18.

AFTERMATH

After defeating the Übermensch, a search of Dr. Strauss' desk reveals a set of keys. One of these keys unlocks the door labeled COMMUNICATIONS.

The COMMUNICATIONS room has all the radio equipment the crew needs to send a call for help. After that, they'll have to return to the surface to await their rescuers. They'll have quite the story to tell their grandchildren one day...but they'll probably be disregarded as crazy old war vets.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Bruiser

The "Bruiser" is a massive, hulking beast that stands nearly ten feet tall. Its shoulders span almost five feet, and its long, thick arms hang down to its knees. It wears a tattered and torn shirt and jeans stretched over its enormous form. Its oversized feet are bare, as no shoes or boots fit them. The creature's features are human...ish. Whatever procedures it underwent

to transform it to its current state have rendered it a twisted, deformed monstrosity. One eye is lower than the other, and the teeth of its lower jaw protrude from its lopsided mouth.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12+3, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d8, Notice d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 11

Special Abilities:

- **Fist:** Str+d4, Reach 1.
- **Size +3:** The Bruiser stands nearly 10' tall, and has long, massive arms
- **Sweep:** May attack all adjacent opponents at -2.

File Clerks

These are the lowest level of employees on Strauss' payroll. They handle paperwork and filing, working long hours for little pay. They aren't likely to put up much of a fight, if at all, since their bosses do little to inspire much loyalty from them.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Investigation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Yellow

Edges: —

Gear: Pencils, pens, letter openers.

Green Spawn

The Green Spawn is the result of Strauss' attempts to merge humans with plants. Initially, the project was thought doomed to failure, as most subjects rejected any efforts at splicing botanical genes. Strauss believed the attempt would prove futile until the Green Spawn showed him otherwise. The creature is a hunched, green-skinned brute with long arms and legs that resemble thick plant limbs. Its fingers and toes are flailing tentacles that lash out at any who get too close. The creature's head and shoulders resemble a cross between a rose and a Venus flytrap, with a gaping maw lined with long, sharp spikelike teeth.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4
- **Fear:** It's a giant human/plant hybrid. That's a pretty freaky sight.

- **Fearless:** The green spawn is immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Size +3:** The Green Spawn is almost 10' tall, with long, thick arms.

- **Spores:** A cloud of spores surrounds the Green Spawn. Each round a foe is adjacent, he must make a Vigor roll (+2 if he covers his nose and mouth). On a failure, the character suffers a level of Fatigue. This can only cause Incapacitation, not death.

- **Tentacles:** Str+d6, Reach 1.

Human Crocodile Hybrid

The human crocodile hybrid guarding the first hall is a particularly nasty specimen from Strauss' attempts to combine human genetics with reptiles. The result was a mindless beast who thirsted only for blood, although it does recognize Strauss as its master and suffers any who accompanied him to pass—albeit grudgingly. Unfortunately, the crew does not have that luxury.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick skin.
- **Bite or Claws:** Str+d4
- **Blood Frenzy:** When another character or animal suffers a wound, the human crocodile hybrid is driven into a frenzy by the scent of blood. This causes it to go Berserk (as per the Edge).
- **Low Light Vision:** The human crocodile hybrid ignores any penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size +2:** The human crocodile hybrid stands 8' tall.

Nazi Officers

Nazi Officers are, for the most part, typical soldiers. As officers, they've made their way through the lower ranks and gained experience in combat and warfare. They're skilled marksmen and well trained in combat. They're also intensely loyal to Viktor Strauss and his cause.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Knowledge (Battle) d6, Notice d8, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Luger Po8 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1).

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: Combat Reflexes, Command

Special Abilities:

- **Fanatical:** Nazi Officers go Berserk as per the Edge when they see Viktor Strauss take a wound.

Nazi Scientists

Although not trained soldiers, Nazi Scientists can still pose a significant threat. Each one is armed with a scalpel, and they're more than ready to use them if threatened.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d6, Knowledge (Medicine) d10, Knowledge (Science) d10, Notice d8, Repair d6, Shooting d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to Viktor Strauss)

Edges: —

Gear: Scalpel (Str+d4).

Office Managers

These low-level leaders push the file clerks to finish their work properly and on time, treating them poorly and badgering them. They hold a measure of devotion to Strauss and could pose a problem when encountered.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Investigation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal (to Viktor Strauss)

Edges: —

Gear: Pencils, pens, letter openers.

Reanimated Prisoner

The Game Master should select a prisoner the players came to appreciate during their adventure (or select one at random if they didn't join the crew in their escape), but also be sure it's one Strauss would have time to reassemble. That's the one Strauss resurrects to attack the crew. This new enemy is similar to the Zombie Soldiers.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Luger Po8 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1).

Special Abilities:

- **Fanatical:** The Reanimated Dead Prisoner goes Berserk, as per the Edge, if he sees Viktor Strauss take a wound.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Fear:** The entire crew is naturally horrified at seeing a former companion horrifically altered into a hideous monstrosity.
- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results (except from their Weakness) have no effect.
- **Immunity:** The Reanimated Dead Prisoner cannot be wounded except by damage to its head (see Weakness below). Other attacks only cause a Shaken result.
- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.
- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a Reanimated Dead Prisoner's head inflict +2 damage.



Viktor Strauss

Although still a diminutive, puffy-cheeked, beady-eyed little man with a receding hairline, the supplements Strauss took significantly increased the crazy doctor's strength and stamina. He won't be an easy enemy to vanquish, but the crew has no choice if they hope to escape—and prevent an army of Nazi monsters from taking over the world.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d12, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Knowledge (Science) d12, Knowledge (Occult) d8, Investigation d10, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Taunt d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7 (2)

Hindrances: Delusional

Edges: Command, Dodge, Fast Healer, Inspire, Jack-of-all-Trades

Gear: Luger P 08 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1).

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thanks to the supplements, Strauss is now densely muscled and his skin is thick and hard to penetrate, making him surprisingly resistant to physical injury.



Viktor Strauss/Übermensch

The Übermensch is the ultimate enemy, genetically engineered to be the supreme soldier. His strength, speed, stamina and more

are all greater than any enemy the crew has faced. His thick hide, enhanced muscles, and claws give him a significant advantage over any adversary. He also towers over everyone in the room, standing just over ten feet tall.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d12+3, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d12, Intimidation d8, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 14 (4)

Edges: Block, Combat Reflexes, Fast Healer, Improved Dodge

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +4:** Thick hide.
- **Claws:** Str+d6, AP 1, Reach 1
- **Fear (-2):** The transformation is terrifying, those whom view it must make a Fear check at -2.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Low Light Vision:** It ignores penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size +3:** The Übermensch is over 10' tall.
- **Regeneration (Fast):** The Übermensch makes a Natural healing roll each round
- **Sweep:** Attack everyone adjacent at -2.
- **Weakness (Head):** The Übermensch cannot regenerate damage to the brain.

Über-Zombie

This was the culmination of Strauss' attempts to reanimate and augment non-living tissue. Much like the infamous scientist Victor Frankenstein, Strauss gathered the remains of the most impressive specimens—most of them former prisoners—to construct the perfect undead warrior. The Über-Zombie is a towering hulk with broad shoulders, limbs that resemble small tree trunks, and a thick hide. Rather than arms, however, Strauss gave the monstrosity a pair of chainguns attached below the elbows. It views any living being in its path as an enemy and attacks without regard for its surroundings.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Notice d8, Fighting d8, Shooting d10, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (2)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +2:** Thick hide.
- **Berserk:** The Über-Zombie has the Berserk Edge.
- **Chaingun Arms:** Operate like two Gatling Guns (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d8, RoF 3, AP 2)

- **Fear:** A giant zombie with guns for arms is a pretty scary sight.

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results (except from their Weakness) have no effect.

- **Immunity:** Zombie Soldiers cannot be wounded except by damage to their head (see Weakness below). Other attacks only cause a Shaken result.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from Called Shots; Immune to disease and poison.

- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to an Über-Zombie's head are +2 damage.

Zombie Soldiers

Zombie Soldiers were once prisoners of war. Following execution, their bodies were delivered to Strauss, who reanimated them for his own purposes. Although slow, they are also skilled marksman when given the opportunity.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d4, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d4, Shooting d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Gear: Luger Po8 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6-1, RoF 1).

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.

- **Hardy:** If Shaken, further Shaken results (except from their Weakness) have no effect.

- **Immunity:** Zombie Soldiers cannot be wounded except by damage to their head (see Weakness below). Other attacks only cause a Shaken result.

- **Shambling Gait:** Zombie soldiers shuffle along and roll a d4 instead of a d6 for their running die.

- **Undead:** +2 Toughness; +2 to recover from being Shaken; no additional damage from Called Shots; immune to disease and poison.

- **Weakness (Head):** Shots to a zombie's head cause +2 damage.



THE FINAL PAGE

By Ross Watson

The Final Page is an adventure set in the world of Morden. This adventure is intended for a group of up to six characters of Novice or Seasoned Rank.

OVERVIEW

The Order of the Penitent is a group of Accursed (see sidebar **Accursed**) who have banded together in order to fight back against the Witches who have conquered Morden. It is assumed that the heroes in this adventure are part of the Order of the Penitent; if you are not using the *Accursed* setting, choose an important figure appropriate to your campaign instead to take the Order's place.

The Penitents receive a message from Victor von Drake, the head of the Order of the Penitent. The message describes the situation in Hebron—a highly militarized land, Hebron is distrustful of the Accursed. One of the few friends the Order has in Hebron is Joachim Achishay, a wealthy merchant whose open-

minded ways often clashed with the tyrannical Council of Elders. However, Achishay and his entire family have mysteriously vanished, leaving their mansion empty. Von Drake asks the Penitents to investigate what happened and, if possible, rescue the Achishays.

During the investigation, the Accursed discover an empty mansion and a lurking evil long thought destroyed. An ancient enchiridion—a tome of knowledge—may hold the key, but it is only the gateway into a nightmare. The Penitents to reveal the true nature of the enchiridion and destroy the gathering darkness before all of Hebron is devoured by a monstrous threat!

ACT I

When crossing the border into Hebron, the Penitents encounter a Hebronite patrol under attack by strange beings known as the Unfinished. If the Penitents assist the patrol, they learn additional details about the

Achishay family (particularly, that the family recently acquired an ancient book from a sinister source).

Investigating the Achishay mansion, the Penitent find it empty and seemingly abandoned. However, they catch glimpses of strange movements in the mirrors, and hear desperate banging sounds on the walls. There's no sign of what is causing this phenomena, the only item out of place being a large, ancient book named the *enchiridion*. Opening the book, the Penitents find that most of its pages are blank. Some pages near the end have faint, barely legible text, with some letters and entire words missing. On the final few pages are inscribed a detailed description of Joachim Achishay and his family.

BEGINNING

The heroes' introduction to Hebron begins with the group already en route. Read or paraphrase the following:

It has taken you the better part of two weeks to arrive at the border of Hebron. Far to the south, this unforgiving land is rocky and barren, surrounded by mountains to the north and east with only limited access to the sea. You have been dispatched to this remote, isolated land for an important task...

Present the players with the Von Drake's Message handout (see page 36) detailing the instructions from Von Drake.

Once all the players have read the handout, continue to read or paraphrase the following:

You have been traveling on foot through the treacherous mountain peaks, but now the road before you stretches out onto a plain. A towering stone colossus lies to the south, its head separated and lying forlorn near its body. Creeping vines wind around this old statue, but there is something about it that suggests it once walked this land much as you do now.

In the distance, the road curves towards the east, and you can see a large settlement there. However, closer to hand, there is a cloud of dust

Accursed

The world of Morden is part of a setting book for *Savage Worlds* named *Accursed*, a place of dark fantasy where the themes and tropes of *Hellboy* meet those of *Solomon Kane*. For the people of Morden, light has failed and shadow is ascendant. Only those bearing the forms of monsters can stand against the tide of the Witches' evil. The Accursed are this world's only hope—they must learn to embrace their curse or fight against it in order to free their world from the grip of darkness.

If you are not using the *Accursed* setting, then include the following **Setting Rules** from the *Savage Worlds Horror Companion*: Backlash, plus the following **Setting Rules** from *Savage Worlds*:

- **Blood & Guts**
- **Critical Failures**
- **Joker's Wild**

Characters should be Seasoned Rank (20 XP). In the world of Morden, the term "witchmarked" refers to the player characters. A witchmark is the physical manifestation of the character's curse. Witches are evil beings of great power and Witchcraft is the magic they, and some Accursed (with great caution), use. Monsters created by the Witches are known as "Banes."

Witchmarked

To create Witchmarked characters without *Accursed*, each player may choose 6 points of Racial Abilities (see *Savage Worlds*) to represent their character's monstrous background. The player must also pick a Weakness (+4 damage) from cold (pure) iron, fire, silver, or wood. The Game Master has final approval whether an ability fits the classic monster archetypes. The only available Arcane Background is Magic, and technology is no more advanced than black powder weapons.

near the road only about twenty-five yards away.

Have the players make Notice checks, with a success the hero learns the following information:

- There is a small group of men engaged in a fierce battle. The distance and dust from the skirmish makes it difficult to pick out any additional details.
- Whoever the patrol is fighting, they have no visible markings, equipment, or weapons.
- One of the men bears a banner indicating that they are some kind of regional patrol.

A raise provides the following information:

- The opponents fighting the Hebron patrol are vaguely humanoid, but they have a blurry appearance that pains the eye to look at them. Clearly, these beings are monstrous Banes.
- The creatures have misshapen proportions and move in a jerky, uncoordinated fashion.
- However, they certainly seem powerful and are shrugging off most of the Hebron soldiers' attacks.

Golem Accursed feel their witchmarks burning, indicating that the creatures the Hebronites are fighting a creation of the Crone.

Heroes may make a Knowledge (Witches) roll to learn more; with a success the character is certain that he has never seen

these specific creatures before. However, there is no doubt whatsoever that they are some kind of Bane. With a raise, the character realizes these monsters are very unusual for creations of the Crone; she typically makes Banes from unliving materials (such as colossi).

The creatures are a group of the Unfinished. Sent by the Crone as scouts, the Unfinished here were set loose from the *enchiridion* at the Achishay mansion and encountered this unfortunate Hebron patrol. Hebron tolerates no Banes (and few Accursed!) within its borders; the Hebronites immediately attacked the interlopers, but are in danger of being overrun.

RESCUING THE PATROL

Once the witchmarked get involved in the battle (for those reluctant to assist the Hebronites, consider reminding the Penitents this is a prime opportunity to change attitudes towards Accursed in this land), the patrol has been reduced down to a handful of men and their leader—Sergeant Jubal Manessah—while the banner-bearer tends to the wounded.

At the beginning of the second round of combat, the Unfinished collectively let out a howl of utter soul-rending anguish, using their scream ability...Sergeant Jubal has already withstood the howl, and is not affected by this attack.

- **Sergeant Jubal:** See page 35.
- **Hebronite Patrol Member (9):** (One is attending four wounded) See page 35.
- **Unfinished (3 plus 1 per hero):** See page 30.



MEETING THE HEBRONITES

After the battle is over, the leader of the patrol introduces himself to the Penitents and gruffly extends his gratitude. His expression is still wary and he keeps one hand on his sword hilt, as if expecting violence from the Penitents at any moment. The injured Hebronites have similar attitudes if any of the Penitents offer help tend to their wounds. The Penitents may try to modify the Hebronites' reaction with a successful Persuasion check. The Hebronites initial reaction to the Accursed is Uncooperative (see the **Reaction Table** in *Savage Worlds*). If the Penitents provide assistance with the wounded and treat the Hebronites well, the Game Master may grant a +2 bonus to any subsequent Persuasion checks involving Jubal and his men.

As long as this initial reaction remains true, Jubal and the other Hebronites say little to the Accursed and have no interest in answering questions, intending to merely return to their patrol once they have rested briefly. Jubal demands to know what mission brings the Penitents to Hebron, and warns the Accursed sternly that they should watch themselves while they are inside the nation's borders.

If the reaction is improved to Neutral, Jubal volunteers information about the Unfinished: "These creatures are like no Banes I've ever seen before." In addition, Jubal and the Hebronites are openly grateful for the Accursed's help. If asked about the Achishays, Jubal admits that he hardly knows them. Jubal is aware that Joachim is a prominent merchant, but nothing more beyond that.

If the reaction is improved to Friendly, Jubal volunteers to tell the Accursed which mansion belongs to the Achishays. One of his men comes forward as well:



"My aunt tells me that the Achishays recently acquired some strange, old antiques from smugglers. Battlefield scavengers more like. Wouldn't surprise me if some of 'em were relics from the Bane War." Jubal leaves the Accursed with a promise to check in at the Achishay mansion once his patrol is complete.

THE ACHISHAY MANSION

Hebron was a peaceful land before the coming of the Witches, and few families prospered during that idyllic age more than the Achishays. The matriarchs of the family proved very adept at issues of trade and politics, maneuvering the family over the years

Themes of the Mansion

As the heroes explore the mansion, the Game Master should keep these two themes in mind:

Mirrors

Nearly every room in the mansion has at least one, if not more, mirrors set in beveled frames on the wall. It is not necessary to mention this every time the Accursed enter a room. However, any time you are describing what the character see or notice, it can be helpful to casually mention that a mirror is nearby. Any time there is a chance to add some detail, consider how that detail can relate to one of the mirrors in the house. It is important to foreshadow the mirrors in the mansion due to their importance in Act II (see page 27).

A Sense of Being Watched

The interior of the mansion is eerily quiet, an oppressive, uncomfortable silence that is likely to have the characters glancing over their shoulders. Emphasize the suffocating atmosphere while the Accursed explore the mansion. Building up the idea that the mansion is very quiet helps lay groundwork for the unusual knocking and banging sounds the Accursed encounter during their investigations (see page 25).

into the upper echelons of wealth and influence amongst the insular people of Hebron. Most of their success was due to trade pacts beyond the mountains, particularly in grain from Manreia and exports of lumber to Hyphrates.

Twelve years before the Bane War, the Achishays constructed a large, sprawling villa to serve as their family home. The mansion was a statement of the family's rise in Hebron society. Many grandiose balls and other affairs of state had been held at the Achishay mansion over the years, further cementing the family home as both luxurious and practical.

When the Penitents arrive at the mansion, read or paraphrase the following:

Two miles from the closest settlement, the Achishay mansion is a sprawling two-story building with a central

section and two additional wings spread to the north and south. The front entrance is ornamented with decorative pillars on either side of large dark oak double doors. Windows are placed intermittently across the exterior, all of them uniformly tall and narrow. Cracked stone busts adorn the eaves, possibly commemorating honored ancestors.

The mansion has three entrances, one in each wing and the main entrance at the central section. All the doors are unlocked, and the windows are far too narrow to allow a typical person entrance or egress. The overall impression of the mansion from the outside is one of stately elegance...with a touch of isolation added in.

Central Section

When the Penitents first enter the central section of the mansion, read or paraphrase the following:

The entrance hall of the mansion is a vaulted, wide room. Oil paintings adorn the walls and comfortable, if formal-looking furniture is scattered about for the comfort of those waiting an audience. Twin staircases curve up either side of the room towards a railed, decorative balcony that encircles the room and extends outwards over both the north and south wings. The most prominent painting is of a middle-aged man with stern features, a thin mustache, and salt-and-pepper colored hair. There is a plaque on the bottom of the frame indicating that this portrait is of Joachim Achishay, patriarch of the family and owner of the mansion.

This part of the mansion has a decorative balcony on the upper level, a well-decorated receiving room, and a pair of doors leading into the greenhouse in the rear. Hallways extend from this room into the north and south wings of the mansion. Make sure to point out the painting of Joachim Achishay to any character who enters this room, as it becomes important later (see page 28).

The Greenhouse

This large room has a number of skylight windows in the ceiling to allow sunlight in.

Plants are arranged in neat rows, and overall, the greenhouse appears well-tended. A large statue of a man in a heroic pose stands in the center of the room next to a pool of water. The statue is aged and cracked, and what was once a stern face now appears to be scowling in anger due to the damaged details of his features.

North Wing

This part of the mansion is a gallery for Joachim's antiques. A sitting room for entertaining guests lies to one side of the gallery, while the other has an entrance to the mansion's extensive library.

When the Penitents first enter the north wing of the mansion, read or paraphrase the following:

The north wing of the mansion has been turned into a gallery for pieces of art and curios from across Morden. Curiously, a large, rust-red boat anchor has been used as a memorial for a lost ship. Harpoons are hung on the walls, and dangling from wires on the ceiling is the skeleton of some titanic fish from the depths of the sea.

The Sitting Room

This room is filled with large, overstuffed chairs and side tables. A map of Morden is hung prominently on one wall, marked with both coastal and overland trade routes.

The Library

This room features several bookshelves filled with tomes on subjects ranging from philosophy to business to art. On a small table near the door is a strange, ancient book.

(See **The Library and the Enchiridion**, on page 27).

South Wing

This part of the mansion is intended for hosting balls and family dining. One side of the dining room has a closed door leading to the aviary. Opposite that, there is an open door leading into the music room.

When the Penitents first enter the south wing of the mansion, read or paraphrase the following:

The south wing of the mansion is used for entertaining large groups and for holding dinner parties. A long,

shiny oak table divides this room in half. Dinner placements are set down for at least ten diners, although there is no food in evidence. A chandelier dangles from the ceiling above.

Aviary

As soon as the door to this room opens a raucous cacophony of screeches and caws are heard within, followed by a pungent smell. The aviary is one of the few rooms that is not as quiet as a tomb. A series of large brass cages line the walls and dangle from chains on the ceiling, holding black-feathered vultures of various ages and sizes.

Malnourished and fearful, the vultures are not aggressive and flee rather than attack if confronted by the Accursed. Some of the cages are broken, and there are a handful of vultures making a mess of things on the floor and windowsill. If the characters are not careful to secure the door when they leave, the vultures are likely to escape the Aviary and be encountered anywhere else inside the mansion.

Make sure to take careful note of whether the Aviary door is left open or closed; this has ramifications for **Act II** (see page 27).

Music room

This room is home to a large, ornate harp in one corner of the room and a wide, squat piano near the center. Sitting couches are scattered about along the walls, and elaborate candelabras are intended to provide light in this otherwise oppressively dark chamber.

INVESTIGATING THE MANSION

The Penitents can investigate the disappearance of the Achishays in different ways. Be certain to reward the use of appropriate Knowledge Skill checks, for example. The size of the mansion means that for any skill used in a particular section (central, north or south wing), requires roughly an hour's worth of time. For the results of other skill checks, see below:

- **Knowledge (History):** A successful check indicates the witchmarked is aware of the general history of both the family and the mansion.

- **Knowledge (Witchcraft):** A successful check means that the character knows that witchcraft can certainly account for the vanishing of an entire family. A raise indicates that the hero knows witchcraft used in this manner must be performed by a being of great power—not just any Bane or warlock can accomplish a feat of such magnitude.
- **Notice:** The results here are specifically used for characters looking around and using the Notice skill to try and find clues to the missing family, not for general awareness when walking through the mansion. A successful Notice check discovers that there are no items missing, although plenty are out of place. Dishes, furniture, beds and the like all look recently used. A raise means that the character can determine that the disappearance looked to have been sudden—there's a cup of tea with a spoon next to it in the drawing room, for instance.
- **Tracking:** Success tells the character that the Achishay family was the only folks present in the mansion until the Penitents themselves arrived. A raise means the hero can trace some very strange tracks indeed—blobby, barely-there footprints leading out of the mansion from the library (these tracks are the Unfinished escaping from the *enchiridion*, which the heroes encountered earlier). If the character gains a bonus to Tracking from smell, he can also discern a faint smell of dry rot and burning ash—a trail that leads into the library (and the *enchiridion*).
- **Using the *detect arcana* Power:** The character using this power is able to discern the presence of witchcraft woven into the entire mansion. There is a stronger sense of powerful, dark witchcraft in the northern wing of the mansion, leading directly to the library and the *enchiridion* within.
- **Using the Witchmark:** In the Accursed setting, witchmarked characters can sense the presence of other beings made by the same Witch. If one of the Accursed is a Golem, he may use his Witchbreed Sense ability (see **Witchmark Abilities** in *Accursed*). Doing so requires a Smarts roll. Failing the check merely means that the character senses something is wrong, but the traces are too amorphous for him to

determine anything more. Success means that the character can sense the presence of the Banes of his Witchbreed, meaning that they were created by the Crone. A raise means that the character can determine that the sense of his Witchbreed is emanating from a particular room in the house; the library (and, if used in the library, points directly to the *enchiridion*).

PHENOMENA

At various times during the investigation, use some of the following phenomena to help accentuate the creepy, haunted atmosphere of the mansion:

Banging on the Walls

A loud banging is heard coming from one of the interior walls, several hard, demanding blows in quick succession. Sometimes, the banging is loud enough to knock small items over or topple a curio from a wall-mounted shelf onto the floor. Oddly, the banging is only ever heard within the room—characters elsewhere in the mansion cannot hear the banging on the wall. Investigating the source of the banging reveals nothing; even if the characters go so far as to tear up the wall.

Visions in Mirrors

Reflections and mirrors in general behave strangely in the mansion. A character may catch a glimpse of his reflection acting oddly out of the corner of his eye. Another character might see the surface of the mirror ripple like water. A character's reflection may have an entirely different (and often, darker) expression or attitude, carrying weapons drawn when the actual character has them sheathed, and so forth.

Using Phenomena

The point of phenomena is to make the mansion seem eerie and give the party the idea that they are being watched. The Game Master is encouraged to introduce these phenomena in situations where it would have the most impact. Some examples include hearing faint, indistinct whispers coming from behind the walls or glimpsing one of the chandeliers slowly swaying as if it were bumped by an unseen hand.

THE LIBRARY AND THE ENCHIRIDION

When the Penitents enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is stacked with bookcases on all four walls. There's a musty scent of parchment and dust here, and it is obvious that most of the books on these shelves have seen little attention or use—All of the books, that is, but one. A large tome lies on a small table next to a reading chair, ancient by the look of the cracked leather on its bindings. A golden gleam spells out the book's title on the cover: the enchiridion.

Opening the book reveals a surprising fact: most of its pages are blank. Exploring further, there is only text on the last twenty or so pages of the book. Many of these pages contain nothing but a few words or letters. As the pages get closer to the end, more text is apparent—but still lacking the occasional word or letter. Only the last page is complete; a bizarrely written description of the missing merchant, Joachim Archishay. When the Penitents reach this point, make sure to provide the players with the **Enchiridion Text handout** (see page 37).

The Book of the Crone

The enchiridion has become a prison for a powerful force of evil. One of the Witches who conquered Morden more than 50 years ago, the Crone was sundered into a number of shards at the conclusion of the final battle. Defeated but not destroyed, the shards of the Crone constantly seek to come together and reclaim their lost glory by returning the Crone to her full potency. As for the enchiridion itself, little is known about the tome other than it is not originally from Morden; the leather binding the book is from no known creature native to these lands.

The origin of the enchiridion is left unknown for the Game Master to tailor for his individual campaign.

Welcome to the Nightmare

Opening the enchiridion sets the stage for the second act of the adventure. Once the players

have seen the **Enchiridion Text** handout, read or paraphrase the following:

Then, a harsh light gleams from the book, eclipsing your surroundings. Everyone inside the mansion finds their vision whiting out with this unholy radiance. When the stinging glare of that light fades, you are no longer inside the mansion. Instead, you are within a gloomy hallway, its walls tilted at a dizzying angle. There's a sense of utter evil in the air, and beyond the narrow, cracked window you can see only darkness. A chorus of anguished moans greet your arrival, making you aware that you are surrounded by the same blurry, misshapen creatures who attacked the Hebronite patrol.

If none of the characters opens the book after finding it in the library, choose an appropriate time and read or paraphrase the following:

The mysterious book suddenly twitches, the cover flapping open. The pages move on their own, flipping from beginning to end in a rapid rustle of parchment. You see something unusual—most of the pages are blank. Only a few near the end have any text at all, and most of that is missing words or phrases in various sections. When the book reaches the final page, you glimpse the name "Joachim Ardishay" as part of an unusual spread of words in the shape of a man's outline.

Then, continue with the description above.

ACT II

Opening the enchiridion activates dark witchcraft that traps all the Penitents in the house and its grounds within the book itself, flinging them into an eerie, distorted version of the mansion. There, the Penitents realize that they can see through the mirrors into the "normal" version of the house. Some of the Achishay family is found, and the Penitents

discover that the motion they had seen in the mirrors and the banging on the walls from earlier were actually the family desperately attempting to call for help. The Penitents encounter bizarre creatures called “the Unfinished,” blurry humanoids who are the insane remnants of others who have been trapped in the book. The Penitents discover that the enchiridion is actually imprisoning a shard of the Crone (one of the Witches who conquered Morden). This piece of the Crone is feeding upon anyone drawn into the enchiridion, consuming their essence in order to regain her strength—and eventually, return to Hebron and utterly destroy the nation that had dared defy her.

The Penitents are also being fed upon, losing some small portions of their own essences. This makes it vital that the Penitents confront the Crone and destroy her before she escapes the book to wreak her bloody vengeance. The Crone’s lair inside the enchiridion’s nightmare realm contains a horrible secret; the tattered remnants of all her former victims, reduced to mindless terror and transformed into horrific trophies for the cruel Witch. To escape such a fate, the Penitents must work together and defeat the Witch’s shard...possibly with some help from the Hebronite patrollers they encountered earlier.

ACT II: BEGINNING

The Penitents are pulled into a nightmarish version of the mansion, trapped inside the enchiridion. When first drawn in, the Penitents find themselves surrounded by the Unfinished, and a battle begins. The Unfinished begin the battle 4” (8 yards) away from the Penitents, surrounding them in a circle. The heroes must check for surprise.

- **Unfinished (1 per hero):** See page 30.

Once the battle is finished, read or paraphrase the following:

A door creaks open in the strange, slanted hallway and a man leans out to look at the carnage. His face is pale, his eyes bulging, but there is no mistaking the countenance of Joachim Achishay from the painting in the mansion. “Thank the Creator you’re here!” He gasps, hurriedly beckoning you towards him. “Quickly, come inside before more Unfinished find you!”

JOACHIM ACHISHAY

Joachim is only a shadow of his former appearance. He is nervous and exhausted from his ordeal inside the nightmare mansion, but he is also profoundly grateful to the Accursed for their aid. His first priority is to ask the Accursed to help him rescue his family. Joachim’s wife and son are caged inside the Aviary with the shard of the Crone, and Joachim is no match for the groups of Unfinished wandering the mansion on his own.

This is ultimately a social encounter; Joachim is in shock and is having trouble thinking straight. If the Accursed help put him at ease, Joachim is more than willing to answer questions (or volunteer information, Game Master’s discretion) regarding anything in the mansion, including the shard of the Crone. To get these answers, however, the Accursed need Joachim to calm down. Good roleplaying on the part of the Penitents can accomplish this, and the Game Master may wish to call for a Persuasion check in order to calm Joachim’s shattered nerves. Failing this check still means that the Penitents learn the information, but make sure to consider imposing a consequence, such as a –4 penalty on all future Persuasion rolls used on Joachim.

Below are some of the pertinent facts Joachim possesses:

- The Unfinished are all that are left of people who have been drawn into the enchiridion in the past.
- Large groups of Unfinished prowl the halls of the nightmare mansion. They can be easily distracted, especially by anyone entering the mansion and moving around in the real world.
- The shard of the Crone somehow feeds upon anyone trapped inside the book, devouring their essence over time.
- Joachim’s family is trapped with the shard of the Crone inside the Aviary.
- The door to the aviary must be open in the real world to allow access into it inside the nightmare mansion. See **Opening the Aviary Door** (page 31).

Returning to the Real World

Joachim also has a strong theory about the enchiridion. If He is asked about the book, the

shard of the Crone, or anything relating to escaping the nightmare mansion, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

Joachim rubs his chin, his bloodshot eyes darting around the room. "I've studied the history of the book, this enchiridion. My theory is that this place is a prison inside the book, a trap meant to contain the essence of the Witch's power. The shard of the Crone is trapped here and has been trying to gain power by devouring the souls of anyone she can lure inside...like us."

Joachim shivers. "But I think if we can destroy the shard of the Crone... the prison no longer has a reason to exist. Her witchcraft has bonded with and changed the enchiridion into this nightmare world we find ourselves in right now. So, if the Crone's shard were destroyed, the prison would be destroyed as well—and we would all be able to return to the real world."

THE NIGHTMARE MANSION

The Penitents find themselves in a dark, twisted version of the mansion that they had earlier investigated. This warped dimension is the doing of the Crone, or at least, the shard of her who is imprisoned here. She lures her prey into this bleak and unnatural place through the enchiridion. The layout of the mansion is exactly the same, but everything about the mansion's construction and furnishings is far more disturbing. The walls and corners seem to meet at odd, disquieting angles. The windows look out only into a featureless void. Possibly strangest of all, the mirrors all present no reflection; instead, they allow a view into the true mansion back in the real world of Morden.

Using the Mirrors

As mentioned in Act I, mirrors exist in nearly every room of the mansion, both in the real world and in the Crone's nightmare realm. From the real world, there are occasional glimpses of something slightly off in the mirrors (page 24). From the nightmare realm, however, mirrors are windows into the real world. The Penitents can see anything

The Devouring

The dangers of the enchiridion go beyond simple imprisonment and the omnipresent threat of the Unfinished. Indeed, the main problem for the Penitents trapped inside the enchiridion is that the shard of the Crone is feeding upon their essence every moment they remain inside. This act of the adventure involves a practical—and horrific—demonstration of the Crone's ability to devour the essences of people trapped inside the enchiridion.

Upon entering the nightmare mansion and every three hours, the heroes must make a Vigor roll at -4. Failure indicates that the heroes' highest Attribute is reduced by a die step, to a minimum of d4. If more than one attribute are tied, the player may choose which attribute is reduced. In return, however, the character is less aware of his own physical frailty as his soul begins to weaken. While inside the enchiridion the he no longer suffers wound penalties.

Only after destroying the shard of the Crone (see page 35) does the hero start to recover from the devouring at the rate of one die step per hour. Consider applying the Devouring to further add some urgency to the situation. Characters affected by the Devouring feel a strange lassitude coming over them; while to others the details of their appearance begin to become slightly blurred, as if gazed at through a distorted glass.

going on in the real world mansion by looking out through one of the mirrors. However, unlike a real window, the mirrors are unbreakable and provide only a view into the real world—although there is a way to use them to the Penitent's advantage (see page 31). If the door to the aviary was left open, the Penitents may catch glimpses of vultures exploring the other areas of the mansion back in the real world.

Exploring the Nightmare Mansion

The Game Master is encouraged to use details from the mansion in the real world and subtly twist them when describing those same

areas in the nightmare mansion. Below are just a few ideas:

- **The Greenhouse:** The statue now has a more threatening pose, as if reaching for a throat to strangle. The pool is filled with blood, not water.
- **The Sitting Room:** Hangman's nooses dangle from the rafters throughout this room.
- **The South Wing:** The dining area now features the remnants of a great feast, but the food is all dry and rotten. The torn and shredded remains of some great beast used for the main course and lies in a grisly pile in the center of the table.

Another technique that the Game Master is encouraged to use when the Penitents are exploring the nightmare mansion is to take advantage of the characters' Hindrances. A character who is Mean or Vengeful, for example, may see the names of old enemies on

the titles of books or paintings in the mansion. An Overconfident character might see an illustration on the map in the sitting room showing him being overwhelmed by dozens of enemies. A Greedy character may find himself constantly noticing valuable items (such as the chandelier in the south wing).

Amongst the other details of the nightmare realm, the windows are unbreakable and refuse to open for any force the Penitents can bring to bear. This is also true of the exits from the mansion. The only escape from the nightmare mansion is to slay the shard of the Crone.

The Unfinished

Unfinished wander the halls of the nightmare version of the mansion and lurk in nearly every room. For the Game Master, the Unfinished act as a pacing device. If the adventure is moving too quickly, the Game Master can have some of the Unfinished blocking access to a hallway or room, meaning that the Penitents need to find some way to distract the monsters before continuing. The Game Master is encouraged to give the players the impression that there are swarms of Unfinished in the mansion, enough to overwhelm the characters if they all attack at once—this encourages the Penitents to act with care. If this seems like an encounter the heroes will win handily, consider adding more Unfinished to increase the difficulty (and highlight the need for the heroes to escape).

- **Unfinished (2 plus 1 per hero):** See page 30.

Distracting the Unfinished

It should be clear that fighting through the Unfinished is going to be dangerous and take a great deal of time. Instead, the Penitents may choose to distract the Unfinished and sneak through the nightmare mansion. Joachim suggests this course of action, having dealt with the Unfinished for some time.

To determine if Unfinished are present in any given area of the nightmare mansion, the GM should draw a card whenever the party enters a new room or for every ten



minutes spent investigating one of the open areas. If the card is a face card of either the clubs or spades suit, then a group of six Unfinished are present or arrive shortly thereafter.

Reward creative thinking with a Benny; any reasonable plan to get the Unfinished's attention is likely to work). Some ideas for ways to distract the Unfinished are presented below:

- A successful Stealth or Throwing check can allow a character to toss an item into another room or against a far wall, drawing the Unfinished's attention there.
- A successful Taunt or Trick check can focus the Unfinished's attention towards one specific character, while others pass unmolested.
- Use of the *telekinesis* or *light* powers can create distractions that draw the Unfinished like moths to a flame.

OPENING THE AVIARY DOOR

The Penitents cannot confront the shard of the Crone without gaining access to the aviary. If the investigators explored the aviary in Act I, they may have left the door open. In this case, proceed directly to **Confrontation with the Crone**, below. If, however, they either did not explore the aviary or closed the door, the Penitents must find a way to open that door in the real world. Only by opening the door in the real world does the corresponding door inside the nightmare mansion open (outside of the shard of the Crone's will, of course).

There are two main options for opening the aviary door. First, the Penitents may attempt to escape the nightmare mansion back into the real world (see *Escaping the Nightmare*, below). However, this task is supremely difficult and entails a significant sacrifice to do so. Second, the Penitents can attempt to make contact with Jubal's Hebronite patrol and get them to open the door instead. This task is also difficult, and requires that the Penitents left Jubal and his men with a good impression back in Act I.

Escaping the Nightmare

If the Penitents choose to escape back into the real world, they face a significant challenge. Joachim is convinced that the task itself is lethal, even if it succeeds (and he's correct

in that the attempt is certainly dangerous). Joachim reveals that the windows are not entirely impassible. It is possible for someone to pass through from the nightmare mansion back into the real world, but doing so inflicts agonizing pain as the body transitions from one plane of existence to another. Joachim has no intention of trying it for himself, since his family is still at risk. In addition, this passage will work only once; the first person to pass through will harden the nightmare mansion's defenses, making it impossible for anyone else to follow. If someone were to want to return they only need to open the enchiridion again.

To transition, the character must simply go to one of the mirrors looking into the real world and place his or her hand upon it. Concentrating, the Penitent can feel the real world just beyond... and with a push, the Penitent shatters the mirror—and himself. In an instant, the Penitent is flung away from the enchiridion's prison and into the real world with jarring force.

Passage into the real world makes **The Devouring** (see page 29) permanent. The hero may resist this effect by succeeding at a Vigor roll at -4. Only one character may make this attempt.

The Return of Jubal's Patrol

Jubal Mannesah and his men (see page 22) provide the Game Master with another option for the Penitents. Depending how well the party interacted with the patrol, Jubal and his men may stop by and assist with opening the aviary door.

The patrol enters the mansion taking position in the central section. When the patrol arrives, any remaining Unfinished in the central section of the nightmare mansion are drawn immediately to the mirror there, staring fixatedly at the intruders (there should be between 12–18 Unfinished drawn in this manner; plenty to ensure that the heroes can move through other areas unmolested). This can present an opportunity for the Penitents if they are in or near that area. The actions of the Unfinished can provide a clue to the Penitents about ways they can attempt to communicate with the patrol. For instance, the Unfinished may begin banging on the mirror, which gets Jubal's attention.

Communicating with Jubal

As the Penitents have already experienced banging on the walls of the nightmare mansion can be heard in the real world. In addition, there

are a number of ways that the investigators can try to communicate with Jubal's patrol. Make sure to reward creative thinking in this endeavor. In addition, here are some ideas that the Penitents may attempt:

- Using chalk or some other marker (i.e., blood, clay, or oil) to write on the mirror. It should be noted that such writing needs to be backwards in order to be read correctly!
- Using some kind of code for knocking or banging on the wall (such as one knock for "yes" and two for "no").
- Creatively using a Power (such as *mind reading* to facilitate communication, *mirror self* to make the hero's reflection appear in the mirror, or *blind* to set off a flare that the patrol would investigate) to lead the patrol to the Aviary.

If the situation is explained (i.e., that Joachim and his family are in danger), Jubal assists the Penitents even if they did not change his attitude during Act I. However, if the Penitents impressed him during that first meeting, he has a sense of urgency about making sure the aviary door is open. Showcase Jubal's reaction as a response to the way the Penitents dealt with him before, bringing the event full-circle and presenting the heroes with the consequences (good or bad) of their actions. For example, if the characters were dismissive or arrogant with the Patrol, Jubal may choose to take his time about opening the door.

CONFRONTATION WITH THE CRONE

Once the aviary door is open, the way is clear for the Penitents to confront the shard of the Crone and escape the enchiridion. Joachim encourages the Penitents to hurry; after all, his family is on the line. In addition, there is a risk to delaying...the Crone is only growing more powerful by devouring the essence of those trapped inside the enchiridion with her. See **The Devouring** (see page 29).

When the players enter the aviary, read or paraphrase the following:

Before you lies a vast, vaulted room, the nightmare version of an aviary. Large cages built of bone and sinew dangle from all four corners of the

room, all but one of them empty. The fourth cage hangs close to a roaring fireplace, holding two prisoners within; a frightened-looking, pale woman holding a young boy. Both are clearly terrified, and possibly in shock, for they do not react to your entrance. Near the other cages are bizarre creatures, clearly some form of puppet—stuffed, vulture-shaped bodies and articulated wood for legs, wings, and heads. These vile creatures are no mere marionettes, however—they move, flapping and cawing in hideous parody of human voices. "Strangers! Strangers!"

Lining the walls on all four sides are portraits in black, barbed iron frames. Each of these portraits holds a still image of a man or woman, their faces twisted in expressions of unreasoning terror. The faded, pale colors of each portrait call to mind similar arrangements you've seen before on the blurry, misshapen creatures wandering the halls of the nightmare mansion. It is clear that these portraits are evil trophies, the last remnants of those trapped within the enchiridion who have been devoured by the shard of the Crone. You gaze upon the final page of the story of their lives.

And as for the Crone herself—her shard takes the form of a tall, inhumanly proportioned woman with green, scaly skin and a hideously ugly face. Her grinning mouth is full of sharklike teeth, and writhing, barbed vines emerge from the lower hem of her robe. In one hand she clutches a gnarled staff, adorned with tiny dolls dangling from worn leather threads.

"Welcome." She cackles, beckoning you forward with a malformed, clawed finger. "You are just in time for dinner." A meaningful glance towards the imprisoned woman and child makes her meaning clear.

Anyone who succeeds on a Notice check at -4 can determine that the dolls dangling from the Crone's staff are all reasonable facsimiles of the Penitents themselves. The vulture-like creatures are carrionettes.

Running the Battle

This encounter is the climax of the adventure and the most dangerous encounter for the Penitents. If the Penitents defeat the shard of the Crone, they escape from the enchiridion and succeed in their mission. If they fall here, however, they have more than simply failed—the shard of the Crone may gain enough power from devouring them to escape of her own volition and return to ravaging all of Hebron. Thus, the stakes are high.

In the battle, Joachim is largely useless; he has no actual fighting skills. He listens to directions, however, and can provide aid and assistance to the Penitents if they ask or command him to do so. His first priority is freeing his family; if he sees a chance to sneak over to their cage and work on opening it, he does so.

Make sure to take note the Crone's power level; she is a very powerful adversary, and it is important to make sure that the Penitents have earned some Bennies to use in this battle before taking her on directly.

☠ **Crone Shard:** See page 35.

• **Carrionettes (one per hero):** See page 35.

Opening the Cage

Trapped inside the cage of bone is the rest of Joachim's family: his wife, Sabina, and their 11-year-old son Darius. There are a number of ways to help these noncombatants escape the cage. First, the cage is made from enchanted bone; it is durable, yet breakable. Treat the cage as a "heavy door" and use the **Breaking Things** rules in *Savage Worlds*. Secondly, the cage is locked by a clever arrangement of bone and metal. A successful Lockpicking (or Subterfuge, if using Accursed) check at -2 can open the lock and release the prisoners. The cage is located 15 yards from the door next to the hearth.

RETURN TO REALITY

Once the shard of the Crone is defeated, read or paraphrase the following:

The shard of the Crone falls to the floor, her eyes blazing with utter contempt. "I am not alone, fools." She hisses with her last breath. "I

Escalation Point

As this is the climactic battle of the adventure, it deserves an escalation point; a moment where the tempo of the encounter changes. Presented here is one idea for taking the energy level of the battle up a notch. As to when this should occur, that is up to the Game Master's discretion.

When this moment comes, paraphrase or read aloud the following:

The Crone snarls, her crimson eyes flaring with hate. "Fools." She hisses, lifting her staff so that the tiny dolls dangling from it are near her face. "You have no idea what you're dealing with..." Her other hand rises, talons extended, and darts forward. Each doll is pierced through by one of those spear-like claws, and at that same moment, all of you feel agonizing pain blooming in your chest.

The Crone begins the battle with her Sympathetic Rend ability, striking just before Initiative cards are dealt for the round.

Presented below are some other ideas for an escalation point:

- Joachim frees his family from the cage (see **Opening the Cage**), causing the Crone to go berserk. She attacks with Wild Attack for the rest of the battle.
- The carrionettes suddenly turn and attack one unlucky Penitent en masse, gaining Gang Up bonuses.
- The Crone spends her action summoning reinforcements, shattering all the portraits as a group of six Unfinished crawl out of them to join the fray.
- The carrionettes start to attack Joachim and his family, forcing the heroes to choose between attacking the Crone or defending the innocent.
- Joachim and/or his family can pull a blazing log from the fire and attack the Crone, setting her on fire (see **Fire** in *Savage Worlds*).

am but one of many..." As the last word echoes in the aviary, her body transforms to dust, crumbling away into nothingness. A shrieking wind springs from nowhere, scattering the dust, and the entire room around you seems to shimmer. Pieces of the walls, roof, and floor flicker—vanishing and re-appearing. The texture of the room itself starts to resemble parchment, and you think you can glimpse words and phrases written across every surface.

There is a sudden, glaringly bright flash that leaves your eyes stinging.

And once that light fades, you find yourselves returned to the real world. Standing in the study, next to the open book named the enchiridion.

Aftermath

With the shard of the crone destroyed, the enchiridion is now simply a book, albeit one with a very dark history. Joachim and his family are free, and quite grateful to the Penitents for their assistance. Joachim pledges to use his influence in Hebron to try and sway opinion about the Accursed. He's confident that the story of his rescue is an important part of that effort and may change some minds in the Council of Elders. If he is present, Jubal and his patrol offer assistance. If the Penitents made a good impression, Jubal offers to add his influence to Joachim's. The Accursed now have two friends in Hebron.

As for the enchiridion, its origin is still mostly a mystery, although it offers a unique opportunity to tie into any ongoing storylines of the Game Master's choice. How did the book end up on the battlefield in the first place? How did it come to contain a shard of the Crone? And are other shards of the vile Witch now seeking it out? There are any number of ways to continue the story from this point, but the heroes have accomplished an important goal. Thanks to their efforts, the Order

of the Penitent and the nation of Hebron may be on their way to a much-needed alliance.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Carrionettes

These beings resemble crude puppets made from wood and the desiccated corpses of vultures.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Stealth d4

Pace: 5; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 8

Special Abilities:

- **Beak:** Str+d6.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; called shots do no extra damage; does not suffer from disease or poison.
- **Ungainly:** Carrionettes have only a d4 for a Run die.
- **Weakness (Fire):** Being constructed of wood and desiccated skin, carrionettes suffer an additional +4 damage

Sergeant Jubal Manessah

A grizzled veteran of Hebron's armies, Jubal is a fierce believer in his nation and its militant leader, Gideon ben Heshet. As a youth, Jubal witnessed Golems under the Crone's control slaughtering hundreds of his countrymen during the final years of the Bane War. Now nearing retirement, the old soldier finds himself wondering if Hebron can survive alone, relying only on itself and eschewing outsiders as Heshet dictates.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Shooting d10, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 8; **Toughness:** 8 (2)

Hindrances: Overconfident, Loyal

Edges: Block, Command

Gear: Chain mail (+2), long sword (Str+d8).

Hebronite Patrol Member

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d6, Throwing d6

Hindrances: Loyal

Edges: —

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7 (1)

Gear: Leather armor (+1), swords (Str+d8).



Shard of the Crone

Although this represents only a small piece of the Witch's power, it is still a very dangerous and formidable opponent.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d12, Spirit d12, Strength d12+2, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d10, Intimidation d10, Notice d10, Stealth d8, Throwing d8, Witchcraft d12+2

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 11 (3)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor (+3):** The shard of the Crone has an armored, leathery hide.
- **Claws:** Str+d8.
- **Fear:** Anyone who sees the shard of the Crone means that the onlooker must pass a Fear test at -2.
- **Feasting:** For every character that suffers the effects of the Devouring (see page 29), the Crone increases her Toughness by 1 (max of +3).
- **Hardy:** The shard of the Crone does not suffer a wound from being Shaken twice.
- **Improved Frenzy:** May make two Fighting attacks each without penalty.
- **Improved Level-Headed:** The shard draws three cards for Initiative and uses the best.
- **Sympathetic Rend:** As an action the crone can target up to five opponents and stab her talons through the doll representing the target. Each target must make a Vigor roll at -4 or suffer a Wound. She may only use this ability once per combat per target.
- **Witchcraft:** The shard of the Crone has unlimited Power Points and knows the following Powers: *bolt*, *puppet*, *mind reading*, *stun*, and *teleport*.



Unfinished

These unfortunate creatures are the remnants of beings drawn into the enchiridion and devoured by the Shard of the Crone. They resemble blurred, misshapen outlines of men and women, with only a few glimpses that hint at any former humanity. The Unfinished move in a jerky, uncoordinated fashion and their flailing limbs can warp a being's flesh just by touching it.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Climbing d4, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Bash:** Str+d6.
- **Boneless:** Unfinished gain a +4 bonus for any Fighting rolls made to grapple.
- **Feast for the Crone:** Anyone killed by an Unfinished is destined to transform into an Unfinished at the stroke of midnight.
- **Paralysis:** Anyone Shaken or wounded by an Unfinished must make a Vigor roll or be paralyzed for 1d6 rounds.
- **Scream:** As an action an unfinished can unleash an anguished howl. Everyone within 6" of the unfinished must make a Fear check. Anyone that passes is unaffected for the rest of the encounter. from fire based attacks and powers.

Handout: Von Drake's Message

My fellow Penitents,

You are charged with a mission of great importance. We have few friends in Hebron, for it is a realm ruled by tyranny and fear. One of our greatest supporters in that land is Joachim Achishay, a wealthy and influential merchant.

He, and his entire family, have gone missing. You must do what you can to find what has happened to the Achishays and provide all possible aid. We need friends like Joachim, or the Accursed will never be welcome in Hebron.

Take care, Penitents. The people of Hebron mistrust our kind, so you will face difficulties working with the local authorities. Make trouble, and the Council of Elders may well cast you out of their borders. Find a way to make our kind useful to have around, however, and we may just find new allies against the Witches' evil.

—Victor Von Drake,

Lord Knight-Commander, Order of St. Vitus

He and his family have lived in the region for decades. He and his wife, Sabina, is 42. Joachim has three children. The oldest, Malachai, is 22 and serves with Heshet's. His youngest son, Darius, is only 11. Heshet's

Joachim Ardishan is an influential merchant from Hebron.

The middle child, Jadrice, died in an unfortunate accident in her youth. Joachim is a wise man, who looks beyond the borders of Hebron to try and find solution to the problems of Morden.

Some have called him a visionary. Others say it is only a matter of time before his liberal views bring him into conflict with the Council of Elders and possibly a fate of permanent exile.

Others say it is only a matter of time before his liberal views bring him into conflict with the Council of Elders and possibly a fate of permanent exile.

to a traitor.

None so far compared him to a traitor.



HEAR YOU SCREAM

Matthew J. Hanson

In the distant future humans have colonized space and encountered many other sapient creatures living among the stars, but there are still secrets yet to be unlocked.

The heroes of *Hear You Scream* are troubleshooters, highly trained and highly paid by JumpCorp to go to places where everything goes wrong. Things went wrong on the mining ship *Kobold*. A few days ago it sent off a distress signal, and then all communication went dead.

Arriving at the mining ship, the heroes discover scenes of carnage. The ship's docking port torn to pieces. Key systems like gravity and life support are deactivated. Crew members of the *Kobold* are dead, seemingly killed by their fellow crew members, and mining drones are programmed to attack intruders. As the troubleshooters explore the *Kobold*, things start going wrong on their own ship. It loses artificial gravity, followed soon by communications.

The heroes slowly collect clues to help them understand the fate of the *Kobold*. The crew discovers a pair of energy based beings known as the Shalain and the Verunth, who cannot affect the physical

world unless permanently bonded with a biological creature. Ages ago the two sides nearly destroyed each other in a terrible war, only to be revived by the crew of the *Kobold*, beginning their war again.

Now the Shalain and the Verunth attempt to merge their consciousnesses' with the heroes', forcing them to question the loyalty of their comrades...

SETTING RULES

Hear You Scream takes place in the *Last Parsec* setting. If you have access to the *Savage Worlds Science Fiction Companion*, those rules apply, but you can easily run the adventure without them.

NEW EDGE

Gravitic Acclimation

Requirements: Novice, Agility d6+

The spacer knows how to operate in different gravities. He ignores the typical -2 penalty for operating in gravity other than his own (see Gravity in the *Science Fiction Companion*).

No One Can Hear You

As you probably know, sound does not transmit through the void of space. Because of this, and because it's a great tool to ratchet up tension, it is suggested if characters cannot verbally talk to each other, neither can their players. This becomes most important when the character's communication links blow out. Explain the convention beforehand so that you do not have to interrupt the flow of play.

The first and most important tool to handle the lack of speech is to represent as much as possible visually. More than for most adventures we recommend using minis and maps. Even outside of tactical combat, this helps players communicate where their characters are and what they are doing. You can use tokens to represent conditions like wounded and shaken. When characters try communicate with gestures, encourage the players to act those out.

Players can also point to parts of the characters sheet, such as pointing to Traits or items on their character sheets. For instance, if the character wants to shoot a space squid, the player might point at Shooting or at her weapon, and then point at the mini representing the squid. Nod and let the player roll dice. If the idea is to complex to communicate with by pointing or gesturing players can pass notes or send a text message.

CHARACTERS

The characters are skilled troubleshooters working for JumpCorp. There are six sample characters presented at the end of the adventure for players to use. If players wish to make their own characters, they may do so with the following guidelines:

- Characters begin at Seasoned Rank (20 XP).
- All characters start with the Gravitic Acclimation Edge for free if they meet the requirements. Zero-G combat training is mandatory for troubleshooters.

- The only Arcane Background available is Psionics.
- Characters begin with C\$5,000 worth of equipment earned over the course of their career.
- Characters otherwise follow the rules for character creation in *Savage Worlds* and have access to anything other than Ultratech in the *Science Fiction Companion*.
- You can also adapt *Hear You Scream* to an existing campaign. If you do this, make sure you look at the **Glimmer of Hope** sidebar (page 40).

ENDLESS WAR

Life in the galaxy takes many forms, but the Shalain and the Verunth are markedly different from nearly everything else. They are beings of pure energy, immortal in their natural state. For eons they existed within crystal formations of their home world, philosophizing on the purposes of life. A schism developed between them. One side argued they should create a society of rigid order while the other espoused individuality and unbound freedom. The two factions became the Shalain (favoring order) and Verunth (favoring individuality). They came to despise each other, but as beings of energy trapped in crystals there was little they could do to each other beyond think mean thoughts.

That all changed when another form of life came to their planet, creatures evolved to live and travel in the void of space. This alien species vaguely resembled squids from Earth. When these space squids touched the crystals containing the Shalain and Verunth, the energy beings found they could transfer their essence into the organic life form. In doing so they became mortal, but they also gained the power to affect the physical world, including the power to destroy the crystals containing their foes.

The two enemies quickly escalated their war of thoughts into a war of extermination. They developed technology to destroy each other, and did not stop until they obliterated their home planet. Now all that remains of their once-beautiful planet is a field of asteroids orbiting a dying star.

Millennia passed. JumpCorp discovering the remains of the planet, and recognizing the valuable minerals within the asteroid field, dispatched the mining ship *Kobold* to the area. At first the operation looked as though it would provide an easy profit. Unfortunately the crew of the *Kobold* discovered not all of the Shalain and Verunth died when their planet did. Some remained within crystal formations, while others lived inside hibernating space squids. The Shalain and Verunth learned they could also inhabit the humanoids who crewed the *Kobold*, and their war started anew.

In the ensuing chaos, one of the crew sent off a garbled distress call to their JumpCorp superiors. JumpCorp sends in a group of troubleshooters, but for the crew of the *Kobold*, they arrive too late.

WE SEE TROUBLE AND WE SHOOT IT

The heroes of *Hear You Scream* are all experienced troubleshooters working for JumpCorp. They are the kind of people called in when something goes wrong. The adventure begins with the mission briefing, in which they learn several days ago the mining ship *Kobold* sent out an emergency distress signal. Only a small fragment was heard before it cut out.

“Emergency! Help! This is Wobain Kaloo of the mining ship Kobold. We need help! Captain Tulane—”

The heroes’ primary objective is to rescue the survivors of the *Kobold*, if there are any. If that is not possible, the goal is to determine the cause of the incident, and to salvage anything of value.

The *Kobold*’s mission was a standard asteroid belt mining job. Most of the work was done by robotic drones, with a small crew to oversee the operation. The briefing officer transfers data files of the *Kobold*’s crew to their personal data devices (see **The Kobold’s Crew** handout page 54). This was the first mission sent to this particular asteroid field. An initial survey suggested it had significant deposits of Scandium, Dysprosium, Terbium, and other rare-earth metals, all of which are crucial to high-tech manufacturing.

Glimmer of Hope

This adventure is written primarily as a one-shot. Because of this, it freely pits hero against hero such that not everybody is likely to come out alive. If you want to adapt this adventure to an ongoing campaign, you probably don’t want character death to be an almost guaranteed outcome, so we provide you the following option.

EMP Vulnerability: As a one-shot, once the Verunth of Shalain merge with a character there is no way to undo the process. If you run it as part of a continuing campaign you might have the energy beings be vulnerable to electromagnetic pulses. Small pulses, such as those from EMP grenades suppress the energy beings’ influence for 1d6 minutes. To completely wipe them out, however, characters need a truly massive pulse, such as the kind caused by overloading a ship’s engine (Repair at -4). Of course this also destroys the engines and knocks out all other electronics in the area, but at least it gets rid of the beings in their heads.

If you use this option, give the heroes some hints that electromagnetic pulses help. For instance Ami Yen’s notes on the crystal might state that its energy producing properties were suppressed when exposed to an EMP.

The *Kobold* was operating for three weeks in the asteroid field prior to the distress call, and begun mining several asteroids, but (as is standard with JumpCorp mining operations), they were still conducting a detailed survey of the field. Previous reports from the *Kobold* are mostly mundane, but two stick out.

Crystals: One week before the mayday, science officer Ami Yen discovered an unidentifiable crystal that seems to work as a natural energy battery. She believes it could have hundreds of practical applications and could be extremely valuable. She planned to continue studying the crystals.

Biological Sample: Two days before the mayday, the drones detected and retrieved an “unknown biological sample.” Medical officer Abdirizak Ahmed believed it was the remains of a previously unknown species. He planned to prepare a full autopsy and analysis.

THE OSPREY

The characters' ship, the *Osprey*, is a former light freighter retrofitted to suit the troubleshooter's particular needs. It uses *The Last Parsec Map: Freighter*.

Osprey

Medium Starship: Size 8, Acc/TS 55/700, Climb 2, Toughness 25 (6), Crew 5, Cost \$23.53M, Remaining Mods 4

Notes: AI, AMCM, Atmospheric, Deflector Screens, FTL Drive, Planetary Sensor Suite, Shields, 2xSpeed

Weapons:

- Dual Linked Heavy Lasers

A1. Bridge: Like on most star ships, the bridge of the *Osprey* contains all the controls needed to run the ship. Because the *Osprey* also has sophisticated AI, most of the time there is only one or two crew members on the bridge to monitor systems and make sure nothing goes wrong, but during ship-to-ship combat and other dangerous encounters, there are stations for up to seven crew members.

The room contains seven emergency respirators in the event of a hull breach.

A2. Hall: This small hallway is just outside the main airlock. It contains 30 extra adhesive patches for crew to grab on their way out.

A3. Airlock: This standard double-door airlock allows characters to enter and leave the ship without venting the entire air supply into space. Security precautions prevent both outer and inner doors from being open at the same time, but this can be overridden with either a Repair or Knowledge (Electronics) check with a -2 penalty.

A4. Stairwell: These stairs connect the upper and lower floors of the *Osprey*. Each floor also has an access panel that allows characters to enter the guts of the ship.

A5. Mess Hall and Lockers: This is where the crew of the *Osprey* prepares and eats their meals. The vast majority of their food is prepackaged meals that they simply reheat, but sometimes they pick up fresh food after stopping planet-side.

The room also contains a locker for each crew member where they store the gear they

typically bring on away missions. This includes their combat space suits, weapons, and other gear listed on the character sheets.

The doors at the back of the hall lead to the upper cargo hold.

A6. Medbay: This room houses a wide array of highly advanced medical equipment, including a "bed" that serves as a diagnostic machine, an operating table, a hyperbaric chamber, and an isolation chamber with an independent oxygen supply. Characters receive a +4 bonus to Healing checks made using this equipment.

A7. Quarters: The crew quarters are separated into two rooms, one for male and the other for female crew members. The rooms contain beds for all the crew members, along with all their personal belongings.

A8. Captain's Quarters: While the captain's quarters are cramped by planetary standards, they are spacious compared to the regular crew quarters. It contains a large bed, and desk with monitor and computer interface.

A9. Rec Room: The rec room is where the crew goes to relax. It contains a view screen plugged into the ship computer's wide range of media, and a mufti-table that can replicate tables for Earth games like pool, Foosball, and ping-pong, along with dozens of games from other worlds. The door at the end of the hall leads to the lower cargo hold.

A10. Upper Cargo Hold: This is the primary cargo hold for the ship and contains their general supplies like food and extra ammo, along with tools that might be useful on specific missions. In addition to a lot of mundane goods, it has: a 3D printer, 12 energy sheets, 4 energy tents, a matter cutter, a matter remover, 6 mineral detectors, 12 EMP grenades, 24 fragmentation grenades, 12 smoke grenades, and 24 thermal grenades.

A11. Lower Cargo Hold: The lower cargo hold is used to store mission specific equipment, and bulky cargo that the team might pick up during the missions. It is currently empty.

Guts: The guts of the ship refer to all the mechanical and electronic systems needed to run the ship. Most of the time they are hidden away from daily view (and thus not on the map), but characters can enter narrow crawl-ways to reach the guts through access panels in either of the cargo holds or in the stairwell.

MINING SHIP KOBOLD

Because of the danger posed by the asteroid field, the characters jump out of hyperspace at least a day's travel away from the *Kobold's* position. As characters near the *Kobold*, their sensors detect the mining ship, and notice a small debris cloud near the ship. When the heroes come within visual range, read or paraphrase the following.

The Kobold is a behemoth of a ship. A relatively small control and living space is dwarfed by the much larger refinery and still larger storage tanks. A cloud of metal shrapnel hangs near the ship. Its source is obvious. There is a gaping wound in the Kobold, where the hull has been torn apart. The docking

mechanism is among the casualties. A single mining drone spins in a lazy circle nearby.

Even by just examining wreck of the vidscreen, a character who succeeds a Knowledge (Forensics) check can determine that the explosion came from within the space ship.

Drone: The spinning drone is a hauler (see page 51), used to transport ore from the asteroids to the ship. It was used in the conflict by the Shalain, but was damaged and now just spins away. Characters who try to access its memory banks can make a Knowledge (Computers) test. If they succeed they find that drone was recently reprogrammed to attack non-humanoid organic life. With a raise they can tell that the programming took place hours before the mayday from the *Kobold*, and it was reprogrammed by Clark Turner.

Exploration and Events

From this point on in the adventure, there is a good chance that the heroes split into two groups. One boarding the *Kobold*, and the other remaining on the *Osprey*.

On the *Kobold*, the adventure is location based. The heroes explore the mining ship; discover clues, fight robots, and possibly have their minds taken over by alien entities...

On the *Osprey*, things are event based. A space squid possessed by the Verunth cuts a hole in the hull and starts sabotaging the ship, first by disabling gravity. The heroes aboard the *Osprey* must then repair the ship, wrestle with space squids, and face having their minds taken over by alien entities...

Players may want all characters to go to the *Kobold*, possibly quoting the maxim "never split the party." Ask them if they really want to leave their own ship completely unguarded. If they still do, let them. This just makes it easier for the Verunth take over their ship. The character's main warning comes when their communications malfunction (see page 49).



Boarding the Kobold

With the *Kobold's* docking mechanism out of commission, the heroes need to find another way onto the ship.

Characters must travel through the void of space at least briefly in order to board the *Kobold*. They have to make several decisions about how they approach.

- **Position:** There are many angles that the Osprey could approach the Kobold from, but the real question is whether they go where the debris cloud is thickest, or where it is thinner. It is thickest near the former docking hatch, which happens to also be in a straight line from the Osprey's initial position, so if they want to come from another direction, the heroes' ship needs to circle around.
- **Distance:** There are three basic distances that the Osprey can stay from the Kobold. It can stay a completely safe distance away, it can come within tether range, or it can fly right up next to the Kobold. No Piloting check is required to stay a safe distance. Approaching within tether range requires a standard Piloting check. Coming right up next to it requires a check with a -2 penalty. If the characters fly through the thickest part of the debris, impose an additional -2 penalty to these checks. Failing such a check means that the heroes' ship suffers a wound. Actually attaching a tether requires a Shooting check.
- **Jumping:** If characters pulled their ship adjacent to the Kobold, they may automatically reach the mining ship, but otherwise they must make either an Agility test (jumping) or a Piloting test (using their space suits' maneuverings systems). If they have tethered their ship to the Kobold and use the tether for guidance, they gain a +2 to this check. If they approach the thickest part of the debris cloud, they suffer a -2 penalty. Any character who fails the check is hit by a piece of debris taking 2d6+2 damage, if they suffer a wound the debris tears a hole in their space suit. If their suit is torn, characters have one round to apply an adhesive patch or start to experience decompression, making a Vigor roll each round or suffer a wound. If a character critically fails, they miss the Kobold completely, and must use their space suit's zero-g maneuvering system to get back to the ship (Piloting check).

General Features

The *Kobold* is a state of the art mining ship. Nearly all of the day to day systems are automated.

Gravity: The artificial gravity has been disabled throughout the ship. Just in case this event occurred handholds were built into all the walls. Characters must move by pulling themselves along these handholds or by pushing themselves off other objects.

Doors: Unless otherwise noted, all the doors are closed and sealed airtight. When the ship was fully operational, they would open and close automatically, but with the hull breach and massive system failures, the automatic systems are disabled. The doors have mechanical overrides, however, which enable the heroes to easily open and close them.

Lights: Unless otherwise mentioned, the lights have been disabled.

Mining Ship Kobold

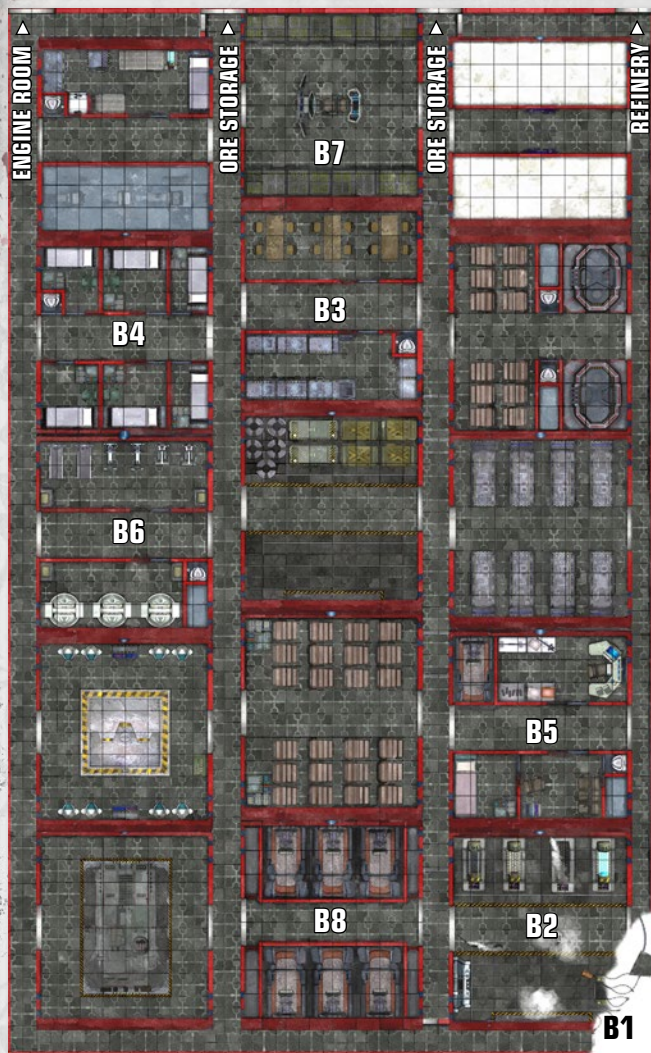
Giant Starship: Size 20, Acc/TS 30/300, Climb -1, Toughness 50 (11), Crew 7 humans 500 drones, Cost \$200 million, Remaining Mods 0

Notes: AI, Deflector, FTL Drive, Drone Hanger (4), Sensor Suit (Galactic), Super Structure (Refinery), Super Structure (Ore Storage).

- **Entering:** Characters who go through the thickest part of the debris cloud can enter the ship easily by going through the hole torn in the ship. There are also three additional airlocks the troubleshooters might enter through, one in drone repair, one in the processing plant, and one in the ore storage section. These are all shut and locked. They can be opened with either Lockpicking or Repair. Finally, if the troubleshooters brought a matter cutter, they can enter any part of the ship that they want.

B1. Breach

The gaping hole in the side of the Kobold exposes two internal areas. One is the remains of the docking portal, while the other seems to be a



MINING SHIP KOBOLD

crew quarters, judging by the beds and personal gear. The area near the chasm is filled with debris, including chunks of the ship, and a booted humanoid foot.

The foot, and several more pieces of organic matter floating in the area are the remains of Wobain Kaloo, the only member of the *Kobold* who resisted the influence of both the Verunth and the Shalain. When Kaloo realized that her comrade's minds were being controlled, she blamed the space squids for it and cobbled together a bomb in hopes of destroying them. One of the squids attacked her in the hall leading to the docking port. Kaloo triggered the bomb, and while it killed the squid, the blast and subsequent decompression killed Kaloo as well.

A medical scanner can easily identify the foot as belonging to a Kalain, and a more detailed analysis in the *Osprey's* med-bay can match the DNA to Kaloo. A med-scanner can also detect traces of another form of organic matter, one that no data banks can recognize. This, of course, is the remains of the space squid. The largest piece that the heroes can find is a blue-gray lump the size of a fist that vaguely resembles muscle tissue.

B2. Bridge

The bridge of the Kobold is an unremarkable room filled with computer interfaces and monitors, or at least it was. Parts of the hull and equipment are cut, burned, and stained with blood. Several panels are open and wires are connected in a tangled weave across the floor. The body of a four-armed man in a space suit floats in the air.

The Verunth and the Shalain fought to control the bridge and in doing so damaged the navigational computers and punctured a hole in the hull.

The body is Yeo Trabnit one of the last survivors of the *Kobold*. He later returned to the bridge to repair the computer, but was unable to do so before his personal supply of oxygen ran out.

B3. Mess Hall & Rec Room

The door to this room has been torn from its hinges. Inside there are two large tables, a small kitchen, a few chairs, and a video screen. Three robotic drones whirl to life as they detect you.

This area used to function as a combination galley, mess hall, and rec room. Early on in the battles between the Verunth and Shalain,

they raided the kitchen for knives and other makeshift weapons.

Later, the Shalain realized if the battle went on for long, food would become extremely valuable, so they reprogrammed three drones to protect this room. They are programmed not to attack Shalain, but of course their sensor cannot scan the character's minds so they rely on Shalain to identify themselves. If the group's coms are working, the drones transmit a recorded message telling the heroes to "identify their allegiance." If they identify as Shalain, they are allowed to come and go freely. If Verunth, they are fired upon immediately. The Shalain do not want to slaughter potential hosts, but they also don't want anybody messing with their stuff, so if the heroes do not identify as either the voice tells them that they have ten seconds to leave or they are fired upon. True to their word, the drones fire after counting down from ten.

If the heroes' communication has been compromised, the robots still attempt to communicate, but getting no response, simply give the heroes ten seconds to leave or find another way to identify themselves before opening fire.

- **Reprogrammed Repair Drones (4):** See page 50.

B4. Living Quarters

A whoosh of air escapes from this room as you unseal the door. Two bunk beds stand against the walls, and personal gear floats throughout the room, as do a dozen oxygen canisters. A humanoid body floats inside a space suit. It is balled in a fetal position.

This is the men's crew quarters, and it was left relatively untouched by the battles between the Verunth and the Shalain. After he realized that he was the only survivor and he was running out of air, Korpesh fled here hoping JumpCorp would send a rescue mission.

Korpesh is still alive, but just barely. He is on the last of his oxygen containers, and the levels have run so low that he has fallen unconscious. The only way to save him is to take him to the Osprey's medbay, (see page 41).

B5. Medical Bay

From the medical instruments, examination table, and environmentally sealed containment unit, it is clear that this is the ship's medical bay. Given the chaos in the rest of the ship, this room is in surprisingly good condition. The only sign of the conflict is the hand held medical devices and tablet computer bouncing around the room.

This room was indeed the medical bay, and it escaped the carnage mostly because those who were injured also died too quickly for the medbay to be useful. Clues left behind here give the troubleshooters a hint as to what's going on.

Tablet Computer: The tablet computer floating in the room belonged to Dr. Ahmed. The data on it is locked, but not very securely, and a Knowledge (Computing) test can bypass the safeguards.

All the records Ahmed made come from before his merger with the Verunth, and many are mundane. The most interesting begin two days before the *Kobold* sent out its distress call. In it he describes a drone detecting the organic samples, collecting them, and reporting them to JumpCorp. He ran several tests on the samples and came to the conclusion they were some kind of "stasis cocoons" meant to protect the creature inside from the void of space. The final entry, dated one day before the explosion, contains a video recording. If the heroes watch it, read or paraphrase the following.

The camera focuses on one of five oblong pods about the size of an ostrich egg, but made from some kind of course hair-like substance. It twitches slightly. A male human's speaks, presumably the man holding the camera.

"I'm in the containment chamber, in an environmental suit to avoid contamination. It seems that my theory was correct, and that in less than 24 hours since its environmental conditions changed, the life form is reviving from—"

At this point a tentacle bursts through cocoon's casing, and lashes towards the camera. The camera falls and lands on the floor, plunging the picture into darkness, but the audio continues.

A man screams several times, then stops. He breathes steadily. Then the video ends.

The video depicts the process of a Verunth recovering from stasis, and then infusing Dr. Ahmed with part of its spirit. The other Verunth in their space squid hosts, emerged shortly afterwards, leading to the eventual battle that destroyed the *Kobold*.

Isolation Chamber: The isolation chamber is sealed when the heroes arrive. Like most airlocks it has a two chambered entrance, with a small space in between two doors, where potentially contaminated air can be flushed out without infecting the ships main air supply. There is currently air within, which the heroes notice rushes outwards when they open the outer door.

Characters who search the room can find hunks of a thick fibrous material that is not easily identified. This is all that remains of the space squid's cocoons. It matches the image in Dr. Ahmed's video, and if the heroes use the *Osprey's* medical computers to compare it to a sample from a space squid (including the mass from the entrance), they find it matches.

B6. Geology Lab

This room is relatively intact compared with much of the station. The walls are filled with computers and analytical equipment. It may not remain in good condition for long however, as three mining drones turn to face the door.

These mining drones are reprogrammed to attack any intruders who were not among the crew converted by the Shalain, so unless the heroes have Korpesh with them, the drones open fire. In a rare act of caution, they are also programmed to be careful of the Shalain crystal, so they do not use their mining laser against anybody inside the room (though they fire from the room into the hallway).

- **Reprogrammed Diggers (3):** See page 50.

Once the mining drones are dealt with, the characters are at liberty to investigate the room in more detail. This room is still getting power and most of the computers

Join Us

At several points in the adventure, the Verunth and the Shalain attempt to inhabit the heroes. This is an opposed Spirit roll. When entity inhabits another creature, including a hero, use the host's Spirit, otherwise assume it has a Spirit of d8 and a Wild Die.

If their energy being succeeds, it merges with the hero's consciousness. While they retain all their old memories and much of their personality, their first goal is to ensure the survival of their species, and the extermination of their rivals. You can give the player one of the handouts at the end of the adventure, as appropriate to the side they joined.

If the character ties or succeeds, they feel that something tried to touch their mind but they were able to shake it off. Give them the failed conversion handout to let them know what happened. It is important to always give the heroes some kind of note so that the other players never know who to trust.

Anything that houses the mind of a Verunth or Shalain, including heroes, can pass a fragment on to others, but it takes time for the alien mind to regain strength after each transfer. Exactly how long depends on the pacing of the story. This can be used to balance the heroes between the Shalain and the Verunth. You might prevent heroes from spreading one race until the other gets a chance to infect somebody, and if one race influences fewer characters, they might get the chance to spread sooner. Also think how long you intend to play for the evening. The shorter the session, the more quickly you can have the troubleshooters spread the aliens minds.

are functioning, though Ami Yen has placed security safeguards on the systems, requiring a successful Knowledge (Computers) test with a -2 penalty to access the information.

Most of Yen's notes deal with the mundane details about the asteroid field survey, including analysis of the various mineral compositions of the asteroids and which ones Yen believes about which are the best targets for mining.

Interspersed amongst this data is some useful information about the crystal that she recovered. She first describes its previously unknown crystal structure, and notices how the structures seem to shift between her various analyses of it. Later she notes how the crystal has unique abilities to store and disperse energy of various kinds, including light, heat, and sound. Near the end of her notes she writes that she cannot fully understand when or how the crystal emits energy, but something about it feels, "almost as though the crystal was alive." Of course she later dismisses that idea as silly.

The Crystal: Even more important than the notes, the Shalain crystal is still hidden within the geology lab, under a removable floor tile. Characters can spot this with a Notice roll at -2. The first time a character picks up the crystal, the Shalain intelligence within it tries to merge with the heroes (See **Join Us**, page 46). The crystal has a Spirit of d8 and a Wild Die.

B7. Drone Control

Once this room held rows of monitors and computer interfaces. Now it's heavily damaged with burn marks, laser cuts, and smashed equipment beyond repair. Even an untrained eye can tell it was the scene of a violent battle. One victim of that battle floats near the ceiling. He has a gaping hole where his right eye should be.

During normal operations, this is where the crew of the *Kobold* would monitor and control the drones that did most of the mining work. When the Verunth and the Shalain realized they were both among the crew, they each sought to use the mining and refinery drones to defeat their enemy, and thus the drone control area became a major focus of their conflict. Each side held it in turn, but finally the Verunth decided to destroy the drone control and reprogram various drones individually. Clark Turner, by then a Shalain, tried to stop them and died in the attempt.

Heroes can easily identify Turner's body. A Healing check allows them to recognize that he was killed with a powerful mining laser. A kitchen knife that he used as a weapon also floats nearby.

B8. Repair Bay

This room contains several inanimate drones in various states of disassembly. Tools and stray drone parts litter the floor. One wall has a large bay door that seems to be an oversized airlock.

This is where the crew of the *Kobold* made repairs to drones that could not be done by other drones. When fighting broke out, the Shalain initially used this space to repair drones that were damaged in battle, but before long they abandoned that strategy.

Characters can make a Repair check to determine several of the drones were cut by lasers or crushed by robotic claws and that two of the drones had their matter cutters removed.

Refinery

The ore refining plant of the *Kobold* is extremely large and thus not mapped out in its entirety. Most of it is filled with inactive machinery and robotic drones.

Tulane's Remains: As the heroes explore the twists and tunnels of the refinery, they can make a Notice or Tracking rolls to discover the body of Captain Brenda Tulane. When they do, read or paraphrase the following:

Small globs of blood hang in the air. It is not long before you find the source. A human woman hangs dead. Her space suit has been torn open and her throat slashed. Written on her chest, in what seems to be her own blood, is a strange word: Verunth.

The scene is so gruesome that characters must make Fear check.

After Kaloo blew a major hole in the crew section, Captain Tulane retreated to the refinery of the ship. She was not alone, however, and Korpesh hunted her down. After a brief struggle, Korpesh slashed her throat and drew a warning on her, implying that all Verunth would suffer a similar fate.

Characters can easily identify Tulane, and a Healing roll allows them to determine that the fatal wounds look like the claws of a Rakashan.

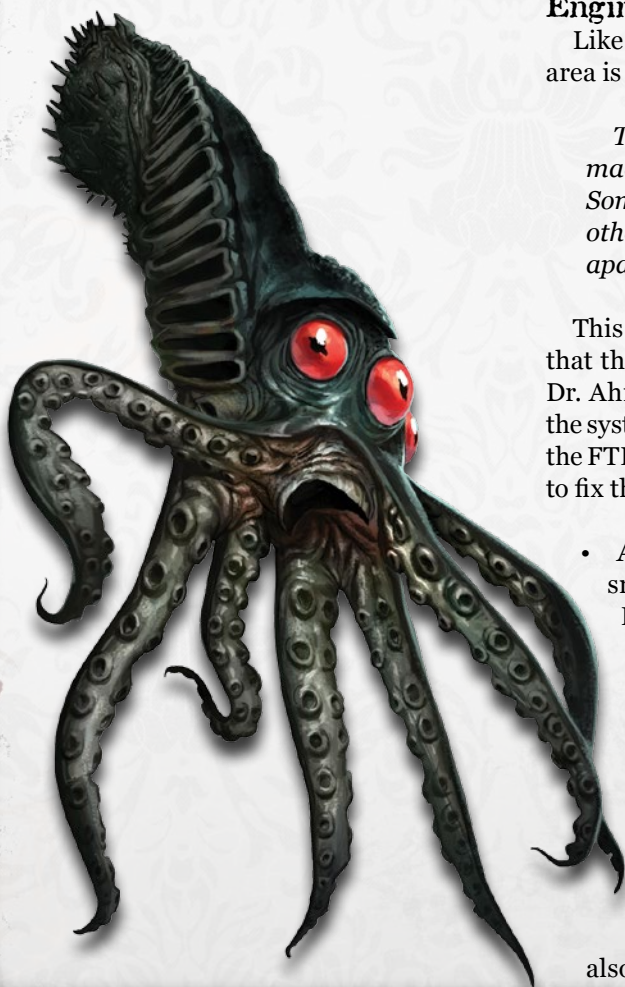
Space Squids: The space squids are currently hiding in the refinery. When they detect the hero's ship, one leaves to disable it, but the other two remain here. Unless the

heroes are being particularly stealthy, the space squids spot them. The squids use stealth, but heroes who are actively looking for something strange (not unlikely), can attempt a Notice check opposed by the squid's Stealth. The squids hope to attack a group of two or fewer heroes. If no opportunity presents itself, they simply watch.

If they get the chance to attack a lone or pair of heroes, the squids strike from above. If the heroes have not already spotted the squids, they must check for surprise.

The squids' primary goal is to convert the heroes to the Verunth. They only seek to kill the heroes if it's clear the humanoids have merged with the Shalain, or if they feel they have no other option to survive. If the squids fail to convert the heroes, or if they receive two or more wounds, they try to escape. If the heroes pursue, run it as short chase.

👤 **Space Squids (3):** See page 51.



Ore Storage

Like the refinery, the ore storage is a very large area, and not depicted on the map. It is where the mineral ores are stored to be transported back to manufacturing facilities for further production.

If characters search the area, they can make a Notice roll. With a success they discover the remains of Ami Yen; read or paraphrase the following:

A terribly burned corpse floats here. Its space suit is melted in places and fused to the skin. More burn marks cover the walls and floor of the area.

This is where Ami Yen met her end at the hands of Yeo Trabnit and Captain Tulane. Her face and upper body are burned, making her slightly difficult to identify, though heroes can tell fairly easily she is a human female, and was still in the prime of her life.

Engine Room

Like the refinery and ore storage plant, this area is not detailed on the map.

This large area is filled with machinery, and banks of computers. Some parts have been smashed, while others have been meticulously taken apart and modified.

This engine room was one of the first places that the Verunth went after taking control of Dr. Ahmed, so they could shut down many of the systems, including the artificial gravity and the FTL drive. If they wish, heroes can attempt to fix these systems.

- **Artificial Gravity:** This system is smashed and damaged. It requires a Repair test at -2, and takes one hour of game time to Repair. A raise halves the time required.
- **FTL Drive:** The Verunth merely disabled this drive temporarily, and hoped to reactivate it after destroying the Shalain. It can be reactivated with a successful Repair test and a few minutes work.
- **Main Power:** This was also only disabled by the Shalain. It can also be reactivated with simple Repair test

in a few minutes. This allows all doors to open and close automatically, and the lights grant bright lighting throughout the ship.

EVENTS ON THE OSPREY

These events take place on the *Osprey* while heroes are exploring the *Kobold*. Space them out as seems dramatically appropriate, but make sure to move back and forth between heroes on the *Osprey* and those on the *Kobold*. As a good rule of thumb, shift the scene back to the *Osprey* after characters explore two rooms on the *Kobold*.

Invasion of the Space Squids

While the heroes are exploring the *Kobold*, the space squids decide to explore the *Osprey*. If anybody is on the bridge monitoring the sensors, allow them to make a Knowledge (Electronics) check opposed by the space squid's Stealth to spot some kind of small object moving from the vicinity of the *Kobold* to the *Osprey*. This might be a small piece of debris, but in reality it is a space squid carrying a laser cutter. With a raise, he sees what appear to be ropes or tendrils hanging off the back of the debris.

Trigger happy characters can make an opposed Agility test against the space squid to get off a single shot before the squid reaches the *Osprey*. If they succeed, they can take a single shot with a -2 penalty because of the squid's relatively small size.

Assuming the space squid is not blown to smithereens, it then cuts a small hole in the hull of the *Osprey*, and slips through. It enters in the lower guts of the ship near the engines. The loss of pressure automatically causes safety hatches on the *Osprey* to close and an alarm to go off throughout the ship. A quick check from any computer port identifies the area where the leak occurred.

The squid then quickly opens an access panel in the cargo bay and enters a series of narrow crawlspaces that contain access to all the *Osprey*'s main systems. Once inside, the space squid has several goals. First and foremost it seeks to disable the artificial gravity so it can move freely in the *Osprey*. Once it accomplishes this, it disables communications, the ship's sensors, and the nav-computer.

While all this is going on, the space squid also looks for lone individuals whom it can convert. It attempts to sneak as close as possible to its targets before attacking.

👤 **Space Squid (1):** See page 51.

Repairing the Damage

Characters exploring the ship can find the squids and their handiwork. The first and most obvious sign is the entry hole. It is only about half a yard in diameter and is a clean cut, rather than the ragged hole an impact would make. Patching the hole is not difficult. There is sufficient equipment in the storage bay, and a successful Repair roll allows the characters to weld on a patch.

Repairing other systems requires characters to enter the guts of the ship, which they can do in the cargo bays or in the stairwell. The gravity systems require a lot more work to repair. Some of the parts are completely fried, and the heroes will need to print new parts using the printer in the upper storage area. In all it takes an hour to fix the gravity controls and requires a Repair test with a -2 penalty.

The squids plan to reactivate the sensors and nav-computer, they are easier to repair, requiring ten minutes of work and a successful Repair roll.

Communication Systems

Shortly after the *Osprey* loses its artificial gravity everybody hears an ear piercing screech coming over the coms, and then silence as they go dead. The squids transmit a signal from the *Osprey*'s that shorts out all the coms on the ship and in the individual space suits.

The coms on the ship and in the individual suits can each be fixed with a successful Repair roll and ten minutes work, however spacesuit's coms cannot be repaired while being worn.

Hunting the Space Squids

As soon as the heroes figure out that there is something on board their ship causing trouble, they likely want to find it and get rid of it. They have to look in the guts of the *Osprey*. Characters may search using Notice or Tracking, either of which is opposed by the space squid's Stealth roll. If the troubleshooters think to use a sensor suite (handhold or ship system), they gain a +2 bonus to the roll. If the heroes search as a group they may make a

cooperative roll as described in *Savage Worlds*. If characters split up however, they may each make their own check.

If the characters succeed, they discover the squid and combat ensues.

If they fail, the heroes search in vain. It takes at least ten minutes to search the ship. Characters can continue searching longer if they want, but don't let them make any more checks.

Hunting the Heroes

While the characters look for the space squid, it also looks for victims to convert to the Verunth. It only attacks lone heroes, but if it evades detection and finds a solitary troubleshooter, it attacks and the victim must check for surprise.

Korpesh Awakens

If the troubleshooters exploring the *Kobold* bring Korpesh back to the *Osprey's* med-bay, he begins to recover and eventually awakens. Korpesh comes to when there is only one person in the medical bay with him. He rasps and beckons for assistance. He then grabs the hand of the hero and a Shalain spirit attempts to enter into the hero (see page 46).

Whether or not Korpesh succeeds, he speaks of great danger, and says he must warn them all. He hopes to gather as large of a group as possible. Then he tells his story:

It was the creatures. Wobain found it floating out there. Brought it back for the Stitcher to take a look at. Thought they were long dead. Must have been in stasis. Eggs or cocoons or something.

Smart buggers. They understood our tech. Not made for Gs so the first thing they did was cut the artificial. Next they took out the coms. Reprogrammed some of our drones to do most of their dirty work. Everything after that went crazy. Met up with Ami to try and hunt the things down. She got torched. I don't know what happened to the others. I fortified to make a last stand. Some kind of explosion must have knocked me out. The rest is a blur.

There are some slivers of truth in Korpesh's story, including taking on the biological samples, damaging the artificial gravity

system, and seeing Ami get burned. Of course he is leaving out the war between the Shalain and the Verunth, and the very important detail he has become one of the Shalain. He'll deny that the crew was ever attacking one another, and if he is presented with evidence to the contrary, he says a lot of things were going crazy, and he didn't know what was going on. He vehemently denies killing Captain Tulane.

CONCLUSION

During the course of the adventure, the heroes likely divide into three camps, those joined to the Verunth, those joined to the Shalain, and those who escaped the influence of the aliens. The adventure concludes when one of these groups wins a decisive victory against the other two. This might be a shoot out or a clever plan that abandons one side on the *Kobold* while the other flies away, or might just be when one faction of aliens takes over the minds of the entire crew.

If the heroes all escape the influence of the aliens, they hopefully still get a picture of what happened to the crew of the *Kobold*. They still must repair their ship's systems, and will probably want to ensure that their ship is free of space squids. To "win" they should explore the *Kobold* and discover the clues aboard it, but the the heroes might just as easily decide that discretion is the better part of valor, and leave the system once they've learned enough.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Reprogrammed Digger

While in space, these large drones look like large rectangular prisms with big lasers and some sensors mounted on the front. They have four legs that server primarily as tools for grasping and manipulating objects, but can allow them to walk if forced into gravity. These drones do most of the actual mining in the asteroid field. A few were used in the battle for the *Kobold*, but because they were not designed to operate inside the confines of a ship they were not as effective as the repair drones.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Claw Hand:** Str+d6
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Matter remover:** Range 2/4/8, Damage 3d6, AP 2.
- **Size +2:** Diggers are 8 feet long.
- **Zero-G Flight:** Digger bots use a compressed air system to "fly" in zero gravity up to a Pace of 8" and Climb 0.

Reprogrammed Repair Drone

The repair bots are general-purposes robots and mostly humanoid in appearance, with two legs, two arms, and head. They used to primarily to maintain the diggers and haulers, but are have also been used for plenty of other tasks, such as patching up the outside of the *Kobold* or retrieving the "biological samples" that turned out to be hibernating Verunth. Once the battle began, many were reprogrammed and used by both sides in the conflict.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d4, Notice d4, Repair d8, Shooting d8

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Special Abilities:

- **Claw Hand:** Str+d4
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Magnetic Pads:** Engineer bots can walk up and along metal surfaces at their Pace.
- **Matter Cutter:** Range 3/6/12, 3d6 damage
- **Size -1:** Repair bots stand 3-4' tall.
- **Zero-G Flight:** Mining bots use a compressed air system to "fly" in zero gravity up to a Pace of 8" and Climb 0.

Reprogrammed Hauler

These large drones were basically automated storage tanks with a drive system. They were used to transport minerals from the asteroids

to the *Kobold*. Due to their size only a few were used by the Shalain or Verunth.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d4, Strength d12+5, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d4, Shooting d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 13

Special Abilities:

- **Claw Hand:** Str+d10
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; does not breathe; immune to poison and disease.
- **Environmental Weakness (Electricity):** Robots suffer +4 damage from electrical attacks.
- **Large:** Attackers add +2 to their attack rolls when attacking a hauler due to its large size.
- **Matter remover:** Range 2/4/8, Damage 3d6, AP 2.
- **Size +6:** Haulers are about the size of a big rig truck.
- **Zero-G Flight:** Mining bots use a compressed air system to "fly" in zero gravity up to a Pace of 16" and Climb 0.



Space Squid

Dubbed "space squids" by the crew of the *Kobold*, these creatures resemble squids from Earth, with six to twelve tentacles connecting to a single body and grow more as they age. They are gray in color except for three red eyes, and their mouths are powerful beaks. Evolved to live and travel in space, in gravity, they are clumsy and slow. The *squids* described below are typical of those housing the Verunth. Those without such an entity have a Smarts of d4 (A), and lack the Knowledge (Computers) and Repair skills, as well as the Soul Share special ability.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Climbing d8, Knowledge (Computers) d8, Fighting d8, Notice d6, Repair d6, Stealth d10

Pace: —; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (1)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Thick hide
- **Bite:** Str+d6
- **Fear (-2):** They first time characters see a space squid they must make a Fear check at -2.
- **Flight:** Pace 1" with a Climb 0 in normal gravity or Pace 10" with a Climb 2 in Zero-G.

- **Size +1:** Space squid weigh over 300 pounds in normal gravity but can compress their bodies to fit through small gaps.
- **Soul Share:** The space squid can transfer part of the Verunth consciousness into another creature, in effect turning that creature into another Verunth. The space squid must have contact with target, though not necessarily skin to skin. The space squid and target then make an opposed

Spirit test as described in the **Join Us** sidebar page 46.

- **Tentacle:** Str+d4, Reach 1. If the space squid gets a raise on the Fighting roll, it can immediately attempt to grapple its opponent. Zero Gravity Evolved: Space squids are at home in zero gravity environments. They suffer a -2 penalty to Agility and Agility-based skills in higher gravities.

PREGENERATED CHARACTERS

Cranston

Cranston grew up on one of the fringe worlds, a hot planet with only small habitable zones near the poles. Orphaned at a young age, he turned to petty theft to survive. One day he slipped into a JumpCorp ship to steal some supplies when the vessel unexpectedly took off with Cranston still aboard. After several days, the crew discovered him. The captain recognized his talent, and rather than just boot Cranston off, she recommend him to the companies scouting program.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Shooting d8, Stealth d8, Tracking d6

Cha: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (4)

Hindrances: Curious, Greedy (Minor), Habit (Prone to wandering off), **Edges:** Gravitic Acclimation, Level Headed, Quick

Gear: Adhesive patches (3), blaster rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 1, AP 2), combat space suit (+4), personal data device.

Dr. Vangir

Dr. Vangir was a doctor in the Tazanian Empire. He served in one of the Pride Fleets healing the grunts returning from the front lines. He was there when the fleet destroyed the saurian controlled planet Kapirath. Afterward he decided he had enough of the Empire. He left his fleet and joined JumpCorp as a ship's surgeon, and was soon assigned to one of the troubleshooting teams.

Race: Rakashan

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d10, Knowledge (Biology) d8, Knowledge (Computing) d8, Notice d4, Piloting d4, Shooting d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Code of Honor, FTL Sickness, Racial Enemy (Saurian), Vow (Hippocratic Oath)

Edges: Gravitic Acclimation, Healer, Low-Light Vision, Natural Weapons (Claws, Str+d6, AP2), Scholar (Biology, Computing)

Gear: Adhesive patch (3), combat spacesuit (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), medi-scanner, personal data device.

H35RL "Herschel"

H35RL, nicknamed Herschel, is one of JumpCorp most dependable and most stable artificial life forms. He has served the company well for decades, and participated in many key missions, though he does not remember all of them. For security reasons, much of Herschel's memory core has been deleted, but JumpCorp engineers assure us that this memory manipulation has no negative impact on his performance. Herschel has always proven reliable and competent in many challenging situations, though he does not always grasp the finer points of organic interactions.

Race: Construct

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Computers) d6, Notice d6, Piloting d4, Repair d8, Shooting d8

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Cautious, Clueless, Loyal, Outsider (Major), Vow (Major—Serve JumpCorp)

Edges: Geared Up, Gravitic Acclimation

Gear: Blaster Rifle (Range 24/48/96, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 1, AP 2).

Mods: Armor (2), Sensor Suite

Special Abilities:

- **Construct:** H35RL adds +2 to recover from being Shaken, doesn't breathe, ignores one level of wound modifiers, and is immune to poison and disease. Constructs cannot heal naturally. To heal one requires the Repair skill—which is used like the Healing skill only with no "Golden Hour."
- **Dependency:** H35RL must recharge via strong electricity at least one hour out of every 24. Failure to do so results in Fatigue each day that can lead to Incapacitation. Each level is recovered with an hour of recharging.
- **Environmental Weakness:** H35RL suffers +4 additional damage from electrical attacks, and has a -4 penalty to resist other electrical effects.

Mara

Mara grew up in a life of privilege. His psychic abilities were discovered when he was young, and because he lived in a world where such abilities were valued, he was given a free educational and even a small stipend. In addition to training his powers, he also studied astral navigation and piloting. After completing school, JumpCorp offered him a generous contract.

Race: Serran

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d4, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Astrogation) d8, Notice d4, Persuasion d4, Piloting d8, Psionics d10, Shooting d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Loyal, Overconfident, Stubborn
Edges: Arcane Background (Psionics), Extraction, Gravitic Acclimation,

Powers: Bolt, confusion, mind reading;

Power Points: 10.

Gear: Adhesive patches (3), combat space suit (+4), laser pistol (Range 15/30/60, Damage 2d6, RoF 1, AP 2), monomolecular knife (Str+d4+2), personal data device.

Sholith

Sholith grew up on a saurian dominated planet called Kaporath. Even from a young age she had an affinity for machines, especially spacecraft. When she got an opportunity to actually go into space she jumped at the chance. She was gone for just a few months when a Pride Fleet from the Tazanian Empire attacked her home planet. After months of bloody battle the rakashan finally ended the conflict when they unleashed a devastating biological weapon that killed nearly all the saurians on the planet. With nowhere to go she signed on to JumpCorp and has been with them ever since.

Race: Saurian

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d10, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Computers) d8, Notice d8, Repair d10, Shooting d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Curious, Environmental Weakness (cold), Loyal, Vengeful (Minor)

Edges: Keen Senses, McGyver, Natural Weapons (Bite, Str+d6)

Gear: Adhesive patches (3), blaster pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+2, RoF 1, AP 2), combat space suit, monomolecular blade (Str+d6+2, AP 3), personal data device.

Captain Mendoza

Captain Mendoza was born and raised aboard a long range exploration ship. She has seen many wonders of the galaxy and wants to see more. She started working at JumpCorp as a shuttle pilot, and before long became a troubleshooter. After putting in several years she was promoted and now leads her own team.

Race: Human

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Healing d6, Knowledge (Astrogation) d6, Knowledge (Computers) d6, Persuasion d6, Piloting d8, Repair d4, Shooting d8, Taunt d4

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 9 (4)

Hindrances: Cautious, Heroic, Loyal

Edges: Command, Gravitic Acclimation

Gear: Adhesive patches (3), blaster rifle (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d8+2, RoF 1, AP 2), combat space suit (+4), monomolecular knife (Str+d4+2, AP2), personal data device.

PLAYER HANDOUTS

CONVERSION

To assist in play, use the handouts below, when a hero either succumbs to conversion or is able to fight it off. Remind the player only their character is aware of this transformation initially.

THE KOBOLD'S CREW

The superiors of the heroes provide them with a complete crew manifest (see next page). If possible, print out this summary or send it to players electronically.

VERUNTH CONVERSION

Your mind fuses with that of an energy-based alien known as the Verunth. You retain all your memories and much of your personality, but you also will do anything to protect the other Verunth and to destroy the tyrannical Shalain.

The Shalain are also energy based aliens capable of merging with organic bodies. They seek to dominate all and rule the whole galaxy as imperial overlords, while the Verunth will do anything to allow individuals to determine their own destiny.

You know that the crystal discovered by the Kobold held the mind of a Shalain, while the aliens from the cocoons held Verunth minds.

You want all your friends to share the joys of being bound to the Verunth, even if they don't seem like they want it. As the Verunth mind inside you grows stronger, it will be able to divide merge into additional hosts. When you want to spread the Verunth, check with your Game Master to see if it is ready. The only way to tell if somebody holds a Shalain or Verunth consciousness already is if this merger fails.

SHALAIN CONVERSION

Your mind fuses with that of an energy-based alien known as the Shalain. You retain all your memories and much of your personality, but you will do anything to protect the other Shalain and to destroy the vile Verunth.

The Verunth are also energy based aliens capable of merging with organic bodies. They care for nothing but destruction and would like to see the whole galaxy burn, while the Shalain hope to bring order and stability to the universe.

You know that the crystal discovered by the Kobold held the mind of a Shalain, while the aliens from the cocoons held Verunth minds.

You want all your friends to share the joys of being bound to the Shalain, even if they don't seem like they want it. As the Shalain mind inside you grows stronger, it will be able to divide merge into additional hosts. When you want to spread the Shalain, check with you GM to see if it is ready. The only way to tell if somebody holds a Shalain or Verunth consciousness already is if this merger fails.

FAILED CONVERSION

You feel as though something were trying to get inside your head. Maybe it has already gotten into the head of your companions. Maybe that's why they've been acting so weird recently.

Or something was just trying to communicate with you the only way it knows how. Maybe you should give it a chance. Maybe things are not so bad...

***** KOBOLD CREW MANIFEST *****

BRENDA TULANE

Race: Human

Age: 65

Assignment: Captain

Evaluation: Captain Tulane is a capable manager who earned her rank through years of dedication. She has a long history working in space. She worked as an engineer for many years before being promoted to captain.

KORPESH

Race: Rakashan

Age: 25

Assignment: Pilot

Evaluation: Korpesh is a skilled pilot, and for a while was one of JumpCorp most promising young employees. Unfortunately he is prone to taking unnecessary risks, and after a string of accidents was transferred to the Kobold, which he viewed as a demotion.

ABDIRIZAK AHMED

Race: Human

Age: 27

Assignment: Medical Officer

Evaluation: Dr. Ahmed participated in a JumpCorp program that offered to pay medical school tuition in exchange for working in certain "hard to fill" posts, such as aboard the mining ship Kobold. He excelled in his studies and residency, and seems eager to fulfill his obligation to the company, so he can "get on with his life."

AMI YEN

Race: Human

Age: 32

Assignment: Science Officer

Evaluation: Ami is an expert geologist, and has participated on several successful asteroid mining operations. JumpCorp has noticed a few irregularities in her financial history, involving the transfer of large sums of money to unknown accounts. JumpCorp forensic accountants are still investigating the matter.

YEO TRABNIT

Race: Kalian

Age: 44

Assignment: Chief Mining Engineer

Evaluation: Trabnit is a spacer born and bred. He began working as a repair tech at a young age and worked his way up the chain. In his youth, several female coworkers complained that he made unwanted advances, but there have been no recent complaints.

WOBAIN KALOO

Race: Kalian

Age: 28

Assignment: Mining Engineer

Evaluation: Kaloo is believed to have grown up on one of the rim worlds, but has no official documentation predating her employment with JumpCorp three years ago. She specifically requested the Kobold for this mission.

CLARK TURNER

Race: Human

Age: 52

Assignment: Mining Engineer

Evaluation: Turner is a skilled engineer, but he is arrogant and has an abrasive personality. He frequently blames his lack of advancement on others colluding against him. Most recently he accused Trabnit of favoring Kaloo because they are in a clandestine relationship.



HOTEL 96

By Brendan & Sara Quinn

Hotel 96 is hungry. On December 5, 1933, Hotel 96 threw a huge party celebrating the end of Prohibition, but the night ended with a terrible fire that killed everyone—nearly 200 guests, party attendees and staff. Unknown to all, the fire was the end of an elaborate ritual to bring a demon of chaos, Xezbeth, into our world. Today, the demon pulls in unwary travelers and relives the night he was brought into our world...over, and over, and over.

The heroes have one chance to escape Hotel 96: they must perform a counter-ritual and defeat the demon once and for all. It is the only way they can free themselves, and potentially every soul that has ever been trapped there.

TALE DETAILS

While this adventure is intended to take place within the setting of *East Texas University*, it can find a place in any modern horror, mystery, or noir setting. The Game Master is referred to as the Dean in the *East Texas University* (ETU) setting, and that convention is used here.

This adventure is intended for 4–6 Freshman or Sophomore characters (Novice or Seasoned). The group should be well-rounded, as there are

multiple ways of obtaining the items necessary to complete the counter-ritual. This adventure works best with players that have a variety of skills, including Fighting, Lockpicking, Persuasion, and Healing. Pregenerated characters are included with this adventure (see **Pregenerated Characters**, page 52).

The Dean must note that while inside the hotel property, technology beyond that which existed in 1930 not only does not work, but ceases to exist for the heroes. No firearms, armor, or any but the simplest of melee weapons will remain with the heroes as they make the transgress into Hotel 96.

For those not using the *ETU* setting, please note that characters should not possess any Arcane Background Edges; the more normal they are, the better. Characters may have the Ritualism skill as found in *ETU*, but it is not necessary. Any Knowledge (Arcana) or similar skill check is a suitable substitute.

The team can begin play as friends and know each other before the road trip that brought them to Hotel 96, but if this adventure is a one-shot, feel free to roleplay during the time before the car breaks down in **Road Trip** so the group gains trust in each other.

PROVOKING THE DEMON

Throughout this adventure, the heroes have to work toward completing the counter-ritual while staying under the radar. Chaos demons feed on chaos, and the heroes find their tasks more difficult to accomplish if they provoke Xezbeth into taking notice of their efforts.

Each time heroes increase chaos (at the Dean's discretion) the Dean is awarded a Benny which she can use to cause an environmental effect (see **Environmental Effects** sidebar) instead of standard Benny effects.

Chaos increases when the heroes do things like start fights, break down doors, kill hotel guests or staff, or disturb the normal course of events. Of course, our heroes mean to do just that, so be prepared to use the hotel against them.

Also, if the heroes mention Xezbeth by name, the Dean can immediately invoke an Environmental Effect for free.

INTRODUCTION

ROAD TRIP

It is just before 2am. You've been driving all night and those of you that are still awake are road-weary. The scenery (if you can call it that) hasn't changed for 100 miles and you can feel yourself slipping into highway hypnosis.

You're currently heading north on Highway 96 a few hundred miles past Pinebox, Texas. There aren't any lights in the dark save for the headlights of your car, and the dust being kicked up renders those near useless.

*Without warning, a loud bang awakens everyone in the car, and a rhythmic *thud-thud-thud* erupts from the front passenger side as the vehicle swerves and skids off into the sagebrush mottling the edge of the road.*

Environmental Effects

Environmental effects should be non-fatal, but their effects last until the heroes defeat the demon and escape the hotel.

Some suggestions include:

- **In a hallway:** The vines in the carpet curl around your ankles, making it impossible to run away. After a few moments, the vines retract and are once again nothing but a pattern in the carpeting. (Pace is reduced by 1)
- **In the Grand Ballroom or other public area:** The room is suddenly completely silent. All of the hotel staff and guests stare at you with wide eyes. All at once, the party continues as if it had never stopped. Did you imagine it? (-1 penalty to Spirit)
- **When stopping a death/preventing a murder:** The walls pulse, seeming to bulge toward you and everything is lit in a sickly, orange light. You feel the attention of the hotel on you...you are being watched. (-1 penalty to Stealth)
- **In a hotel room or hallway (anywhere with pictures on the walls):** You hear faint hoofbeats. Suddenly, a zebra bursts out of the painting behind you and you feel its hoof impact with the back of your head before disappearing. (The victim makes a Vigor roll or suffers a level of Fatigue from **Bumps and Bruises**.)
- **In the basement:** The air all around has become very, very dry. No amount of liquid can get rid of a tickle in the back of your throat. (Hero incurs Quirk (Always Thirsty/Drinking))

At this point (and from here on out until the heroes defeat the demon) cell phones don't function for much more than flashlights. The spare tire in the trunk looks worse than the popped one hanging in tatters around the front wheel.

The team is already stuck in the grasp of the hotel. If the characters wait, time seems to stand still and daybreak never comes. There

are no passing vehicles. Any water they brought with them soon runs out and their only option is to move forward on foot.

HOTEL 96

Off in the distance, a dull pink glow flashes on and off. As you approach, the light takes on the shape of the word “Vacancy” in audacious neon underneath a sign that reads Hotel 96.

The hotel looks like it was built in the 1920s and has been either perfectly maintained or restored to its original glory. It is a single-building, two story hotel with beautiful wrought iron patterns and scrolling stonework.

A successful Knowledge (History) roll allows a character to recognize the architecture as authentic 1920s Art Deco. With a raise, the hero recalls a story about the hotel being damaged by a fire in the 1930s (after which it was evidently painstakingly restored).

There’s a light on at the front door. Ground level windows are all frosted and cannot be peered through. Windows can be broken, but everything within is completely obscured by darkness.

LOBBY

As soon as you open the door to the hotel, light pours out around you. Gaslight reflects on golden wood inlay, and without walking forward you find yourselves standing in the lobby of a grand hotel. Dozens of guests and waitstaff bustle about the lobby frenetically. Beyond them through a massive pair of open doors is a great ballroom. A 20 piece orchestra accompanies a flaxen-haired starlet belting out note after note of intoxicating songs while dozens of partygoers laugh, dance, and drink.

To the left, a desk clerk looks at your group and says, “May I help you?”

The clerk’s name is Anders; a successful Notice roll allows a character to pull their senses together enough to focus on him and read his name tag. If asked, Anders tells the heroes that tonight is a celebration of the end of Prohibition. All drinks are on the house and they are welcome to join the revelry as they see fit.

It is important to note here that if any characters look back at the door through which they entered, it is gone. The door has been replaced entirely by a mahogany wall matching the rest of the decor, as if the entrance had never been there to begin with. In fact, there are no exits—doors, windows or otherwise—anywhere in the hotel.

There is one room available for the night, and the group is welcome to it. The party is given room key #8. Anders presses the hammer of a small bell on his desk and all heroes immediately experience a shared premonition:

You are in the ruins of the hotel. The walls and carpet are still smoldering and the lobby is filled with smoke. Surrounding the heroes are dozens of charred corpses. One of them shambles toward you and reaches out.

The heroes must make a Spirit roll, or become Shaken. Unshaken characters notice the corpse is wearing a name tag that reads “Anders”).

A voice hisses through the black, ashen mouth of the former clerk, equal parts dry crackling and anger. “He lied to me,” he says. “This isn’t what I wanted. This wasn’t the deal I made.”

“You have to end this. You have to save us all.”

At this point, characters can attempt to ask questions; however, movement is limited. A character walking in any direction for more than a few feet is met with a wall of smoke too thick to pass through.

The corpse of Anders reveals he attempted to summon a demon which promised him wealth, power, and immortality for the price of 100 souls. For over 80 years, everyone inside Hotel 96 has relived the night of the celebration—and its fiery end—ceaselessly.

Anders tells the heroes they will shortly return to the party and must perform the counter-ritual found in his journal to disrupt



the re-enactment of summoning of the chaos demon. While the past Anders needs to be confronted, simply stopping him is not enough to release the group and all of the trapped souls. **Note:** Anders does not use the name Xezbeth, as doing so would call its attention.

In addition, Anders warns the team while the demon has become complacent after decades of trapping and consuming new souls, it can be provoked by causing excessive amounts of distress amongst the denizens of the hotel.

At the Dean's discretion, the premonition can be ended with Anders exclaiming:

*"No! He knows you're here! Find it!
End this!"*

It is important to note from this point forward, Anders is nowhere to be found. Another night clerk has taken over Anders' position at the registration desk, and when the heroes eventually find their way to Anders' room he is not around to deter them. Anders only appears once the team attempts to perform the counter-ritual in the prepared chamber in the basement beneath Anders' room (**Ritual Room**, page 69).

Once the premonition ends, the characters are transported to Room 8 (see **Room #8: Your Room**, page 68).

If the heroes search the lobby, they see a newspaper on a stool in the shoe shine area reading "Prohibition Over" and showing the date December 5th, 1933.

FIRST FLOOR

Grand Ballroom

Descending into the grand ballroom, you are surrounded by men and women asking you to dance. Hotel waitstaff offer you champagne and fine hors d'oeuvres. On your left as you enter are several tables set up for partygoers to relax between sets. On your right is the kitchen and a long bar serving food and drink constantly. Before you is a parquet floor designed in the pattern of a permanent sunrise filled with the feet of drunk and stumbling dancers.

The crown jewel of the room, the stunning Dolores Grey, is singing delightfully risqué jazz tunes,

First Floor Rooms

Grand Ballroom (page 59): The Grand Ballroom holds the largest concentration of hotel guests. Dolores Grey is singing on stage. There is a large dance floor covered in drunken, dancing patrons, and a bar along the side of the room.

The heroes overhear gossip which provides clues regarding the goings on at Hotel 96. The entrance to the **Staff Area** can be seen from the Grand Ballroom as well.

Lobby (page 58): After the initial encounter with Anders the night clerk, he isn't seen again until our heroes reach the Ritual Room.

The only thing odd about the hotel lobby is that it doesn't have any windows or doors. Heroes find a newspaper dated December 5, 1933 on a stool in the shoe shine area if they search the lobby.

The Bar (page 61): Here, the heroes can hear false rumors and lies from Sullivan the bartender.

Kitchen (page 61): Richard Dougherty from Room #9 is here, demanding rat poison. Knives and other kitchen paraphernalia are found here. The door to a walk-in freezer can be seen.

Walk-In Freezer (page 62): A premonition occurs here.

Utility Closet (page 62): Rat poison containing arsenic for the counter-ritual is found here.

S1: Storage (page 62): In this room, our heroes come face-to-face with a stuffed puma.

S2: Anders' Room (page 62): Anders' journal can be found here (containing the counter-ritual): as well as a trap door leading to the Ritual Room.

S3: Medic (page 63): Chloroform, morphine ampoules, bandages, and other medical equipment can be found here. There are also doctor's notes regarding the victim in S4.

S4: Groaning Man (page 63): A man suffering from rabid rat bites can be found here.

Laundry Room: Poker Game (page 64): There is a poker game here which the heroes can join. There is an encounter with Vinnie Two-Fingers, gamblers, and bodyguards. Dolores' contract can be obtained here as well. This is the only area of the hotel where our heroes can find guns.

Stairwell (page 62): Blocked due to rat infestation.

Cargo Elevator (page 62).

accompanied by a 20 piece orchestra of masterful performers. The music infuses the dancers with reckless abandon.

A successful Streetwise allots the heroes one of the following rumors overheard as they mingle through the crowd. A raise affords two:

- A maid walking toward the staff entrance says, "As if we didn't have enough to deal with down here, they have to do that...whatever it is they're doing in the Presidential Suite." A second maid right behind her replies, "I know! They keep asking me for more candles! I swear they're going to burn this place to the ground!" (see **Room #1: Presidential Suite**, page 64).
- A maid is overheard saying, "Dolores' boyfriend is in the laundry room playing cards with a couple of mooks. They've been

in there all night and I've still got sheets to wash for tomorrow!" (see **Laundry Room: Poker Game**, page 64).

- A man serving hors d'oeuvres says to another server, "They had to order more rat poison. Whatever's going on in the basement keeps getting worse. I haven't seen that exterminator since he showed up three days ago." (see **Boiler Room: The Rat Catcher**, page 70)

The **Staff Area** (page 61) can be accessed through a door adjacent to the bar and reads "Staff Only." A successful Notice detects this, or any of the waiters can be tipped to provide the information. If any of the staff is asked about Anders' room, a successful Persuasion check gets the team its location.

The door to the staff area is manned by a hotel employee named Oliver. A successful Notice

roll indicates Oliver's main focus is on Dolores. While he's hardly the most capable guardian, Oliver is standing right next to the door. A Stealth check at -2 is required to sufficiently blend in with the staff coming in and out.

A distraction can pull him away from his post (Persuasion) but anything that causes harm to either Oliver or any other partygoer increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57). If the heroes harm Oliver directly, the note Dolores is singing at the time holds and grows in volume to the point of shaking the walls and shattering glasses. All heroes black out. When they come to, they are standing where they were before the assault occurred as if nothing happened.

The Bar

The bar is manned by Sullivan—a cheerful fellow in his late 40s who knows everyone's drink and name by heart. He's known for weaving long meandering tales to anyone who listens, and is happy to answer any question posed to him. The problem is, Sullivan is a compulsive liar and all of the information he gives to the heroes is worthless. His lies are not particularly good, and if a hero calls him on it, Sullivan plays it off and leaves to tend to another guest.

Examples of Sullivan's tall tales:

- *I once served whiskey to a pirate at this very bar, not three feet from where you're standing, my friend! He had two wooden legs and only hooks for hands...*
- *Did you know this lovely hotel was once home to an Arabian prince? Oh yes, we've housed royalty from all over the world...*
- *Have I told you how they built this hotel without a room number four? Strangest thing! There are rooms numbered one through three and five through nine, but they went and skipped number four.*

Note that asking Sullivan three or more questions increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57).

Staff Area

Going through the "Staff Only" door, the heroes see a short hallway. It looks like another hallway transects it to the right, just past the kitchen. On the left, a cargo elevator can be seen. There are two doors beyond it.

Kitchen

If characters walk past the kitchen and do not enter, allow them a Notice check to overhear Richard Dougherty (from Room #9) demanding the custodial staff give him rat poison to deal with the vermin problem in his room. If the heroes do not notice this interaction, and do not enter the Kitchen, then Dougherty is able to secure the rat poison and murder his mistress (**Room #9: A Torrid Affair**, page 68).

If characters enter:

The hotel kitchen is almost as loud as the ballroom though it has one-tenth the amount of people.

Loudest of all is a man in his mid 30s barking at a custodian. Through spittle gilded lips he shouts, "Rats! Rats in my room! I demand poison so they can be dealt with immediately! One night in this establishment cost me what you must earn in a year, and I will not spend it listening to those disgusting creatures scurrying about in the walls."

A successful Notice roll allows a character to recognize his voice and realize that the man yelling at the custodian is the same man who was trying to calm the hysterical woman in **Room #9: A Torrid Affair** (page 68).

Dougherty can be stopped in any way that the characters can come up with and the Dean allows, though if the method they choose is especially public (seen by more than one guest or staff member) it increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57). Successfully stopping Dougherty earns the heroes a Benny apiece.

- **Richard Dougherty:** Use the Partygoers profile. See page 74.

If Dougherty is not confronted, he proceeds upstairs to murder his mistress. After performing this heinous deed, Dougherty joins the crowd of drinkers and dancers in the Grand Ballroom, having served his purpose.

For the most part, the kitchen staff is far too busy to notice the heroes as long as they don't deliberately try to get in the way. Standard kitchen items can be found here: knives, pots, pans, etc., all of which can be swiped with a Stealth roll at +2. There is a door in the back that leads to a large walk-in freezer.

Walk-In Freezer

The heroes hear the ding of a bell as they open the freezer and once again share a premonition:

Anders is pushing aside massive slabs of meat as he makes his way to the shelves lining the back of the hotel's walk-in freezer. The fog of his breath becomes more apparent as he begins moving boxes, finally retrieving a small metal lozenge case. He opens it. Inside is a human eyeball frozen solid.

The freezer holds slabs of beef and other cold storage items...nothing else of particular note.

Cargo Elevator

The elevator is large and industrial looking, with nothing but a cage to close it in front. The cage is locked with a very large, very strange locking mechanism. In order to enter, the lock on the cage may be opened with a Lockpicking roll at a -2.

Upon entering, the heroes see only a lever on the wall. The lever can be moved up or down. It is important to note this is an old cargo elevator which cannot be summoned and is only moved from the inside. It is currently at rest on the first floor.

Moving the lever down takes them down, and moving it up takes them up. Going between the first and second floor, nothing "weird" happens. The elevator can access the basement as well as the first and second floors. Only when going to the basement does the following scenario occur:

The elevator shudders and begins its slow, tedious journey. Between floors, the darkness inside is, for a moment, absolute. When the faint light from the basement finally makes an appearance, you see blood streaming down the walls in rivulets.

If the heroes investigate the cargo elevator, the only thing they find is the name "Xezbeth" written in blood. Saying the name aloud increases chaos and allows the GM a free environmental effect (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57).

Utility Closet

Rat poison can be found here. Its main ingredient is arsenic, which the heroes can

use in the counter-ritual. Also, on a successful Notice roll, a hero sees a rat caught in a trap. It appears as though the rat's tail has been torn off.

Stairwell

The stairwell is boarded up and cannot be broken down without a blunt force weapon of some kind. Any attempt to break down the barricade increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57) and brings two members of Hotel Staff and the Bodyguard running. They explain the hotel doctor (Medic) ordered it shut against the rats.

- **Hotel Staff (2):** See page 74.
- **Bodyguard:** See page 74.

Note that the stairwell goes only between the first floor and the basement.

S1: Storage

The door to the Storage room is locked but can be opened with a successful Lockpicking roll. Whoever opens the door must make a Fear check.

Opening the door brings you face-to-face with an eight foot, two hundred fifty pound puma screaming and slashing out at you with its claws. A moment later, you realize that the puma is an incredibly fine taxidermy.

From the door frame to as far back as the clutter allows, all that can be seen in this room are dozens of paintings, statuary and hunting trophies that were hastily pulled from the Grand Ballroom and shoved into this small alcove.

If the team has found reference to the ingredients needed for Anders' ritual in the "Bible" located in their room (see **Room #8: Your Room**, page 68), reveal that the puma is missing a whisker on its left side.

S2: Anders' Room

Anders' door is locked. A distraction is needed to pick it at standard difficulty because of the stocky guard standing at the Laundry Room Entrance (see **Laundry Room: Poker Game**, page 64), otherwise the Lockpicking check is at a -1. A Stealth roll is required as well—each person attempting to enter the

door without attracting the attention of the guard incurs a -1 cumulative penalty to his Stealth roll.

Breaking the door down is an option, but this arouses the curiosity of Xezbeth and increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57).

There are two things you notice immediately once you enter the night clerk's room. First, the temperature of the room is 25 to 30 degrees cooler than out in the hallway. Second, it is completely silent once the threshold of the door has been crossed.

Other than the bed in the center of the room and a small writing table, the room is devoid of furniture. The only light is a single filament bulb dangling from a chain in the middle of the ceiling. The floor is cinderblock, with a thinning mat of dull fabric glued down as carpet. On the walls are hundreds of intricate symbols and circles written in ink.

Anyone searching the room finds Anders' journal between his mattress pad and bed frame.

Note: Give the handout **Handout: Anders Journal** (page 77) to one player. At this point, the characters have found the counter-ritual. They need to collect Arsenic, a Rat's Tail, and Cremated Human Remains and then perform the counter-ritual in the Ritual Room.

When the journal is picked up, the heroes' ears are filled with the sound of a ringing bell...

Anders' room contains stacks of arcane tomes in haphazard piles, flipped to random pages depicting diagrams, drawings, and accounts in languages long lost to the modern world. Anders is standing along the southern wall carefully and adeptly drawing long, wide arcs and muttering to himself.

Anyone with Knowledge: Arcana or a similar skill can make a roll to realize that Anders is forging a circle of protection around the perimeter of his room.

If the bed is moved or looked under during the search, the heroes notice a trap door. It is padlocked, but can be Lockpicked or broken without penalty.

Opening the trap door reveals a rickety ladder descending into the complete and utter darkness of the **Ritual Room** (page 69).

S3: Medic

The door is locked. Any attempt to pick it is at a -2 and requires a Stealth roll unless the guard in front of the Laundry Room has been distracted (see **Laundry Room: Poker Game**, page 64). The doctor is not in the room. Searching the room makes several things available: Chloroform, morphine ampoules, bandages, and other medical equipment.

Any character with a Healing skill receives a +2 when using this room to perform medical services. In addition, a Notice check allows heroes to find the hotel doctor's notes regarding the man in S4 (see below). He notes that aside from the veracity of the rats, they seem to have caused the victim to suffer almost instantaneous infection. The doctor also suggests the aggressive behavior of the rats goes beyond that of protecting territory, and they may indeed be rabid. He has warned hotel staff not to enter the basement unless absolutely necessary.

S4: Groaning Man

The door to S4 is closed but not locked. From inside, the persistent groaning of a young man can be heard.

If opened:

The first thing that hits you is the smell. The scent of warm, rotten meat pushes its way over you and out into the hall. On the bed within rests a man no older than 20. His head, face, arms and hands are covered in seeping, yellow-brown gauze. His shirt has been removed, and patches of gauze have been taped around his chest and abdomen. His left foot is nothing more than a stump wrapped in similar dressing.

On the nightstand next to him is a prescription bottle of morphine, a half empty bottle of antiseptic, and additional rolls of gauze.

This poor young man has been nearly eaten alive by rats, and hastily treated by medical staff and left to suffer. He's been heavily dosed with morphine, but is still crying out. The only

intelligible thing he can say is, “Don’t let the rats eat my other foot.”

A character making a Healing check spends 20 minutes undressing, cleaning, and redressing the man’s wounds. Doing so increases chaos (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57), but awards the healer with a Benny. The young man—if healed—falls into a peaceful sleep.

Laundry Room: Poker Game

Outside the laundry room, a thick mook named Rocco is making the hallway uglier. Rocco interferes if heroes get within one room of the Laundry Room without passing a Stealth check (a cumulative penalty of -1 per person attempting to hide in plain sight). First interference is a verbal warning telling the heroes to scram. The next time, Rocco knocks three times on the door and more bodyguards (one for each character) emerge with baseball bats.

- **Rocco:** Use the bodyguard profile, Rocco is a Wild Card. See page 74.
- **Bodyguards (1 per hero):** See page 74.

If the heroes are wrapped up in combat with the goons, by the time the fight is over gunfire rings out from the Laundry room. If investigated, the team finds Vinnie Two-Fingers as well as four other wiseguys dead around a poker table. A Notice check finds a locked cash box containing \$5,000 in cash and Dolores Grey’s contract.

If instead our heroes are able to talk their way into the game (Persuasion at a -2), or if the characters can produce \$1500 in cash or items, they encounter the following scenario:

Tonight’s Laundry Room Poker Game is being run by Vinnie Two-Fingers: former bootlegger, smuggler, and all-around tough guy. By the look of it, Vinnie’s out of luck and out of cash. The students are introduced to the table as Vinnie is buying back in by putting up Dolores Grey’s contract as collateral.

After a hand or two, Wiseguy One accuses Wiseguy Three of having an Ace up his sleeve. Draw initiative. The gangsters are going to be shooting at everyone. Rocco charges in after the first round and tries to protect or avenge Vinnie Two-Fingers. After the fight, our heroes can search the room without a Notice check for cash and the contract.

If the heroes deliver Dolores’ contract to her, or destroy it while she watches, they all receive a Benny for their efforts.

- **Vinnie Two-Fingers:** Use Gambler profile. Vinnie is a Wild Card. See page 74.
- **Rocco:** Use the bodyguard profile. Rocco is a Wild Card. See page 74.
- **Gamblers (3):** See page 74.
- **Bodyguards (1 per hero):** See page 74.

SECOND FLOOR

The Mezzanine

You are all standing on a mezzanine overlooking the Grand Ballroom below. The carpeting is covered in large floral patterns, and the walls between the rooms are evenly divided by large paintings. Some of the paintings depict people lounging in harmless bacchanalia, others are of animals lurking in tall African grasses.

Over the hand-carved railing, the sounds of music and laughter create a cheery din, peppered with the tinkling of glasses. Beneath it all the band is playing an up-tempo song, and you can see that many couples are dancing happily, if somewhat drunkenly.

Room #1: Presidential Suite

If the heroes arrive at the Presidential Suite before finding the counter-ritual in Anders’ room:

A striking, older woman slides a large panel open on the door and peers through. She’s dressed in sequined silks, and wears a turban-like headdress bejeweled with fake emeralds and sapphires. The woman addresses you in a far too dramatic voice, “The Mysterious Marvin is entering a trance and cannot be disturbed. Please go.” With that, she slams the small panel and latches the door.

If the team arrives at the suite after finding the counter-ritual:

A woman nearing sixty opens the door. She is dressed head-to-toe in silks and rhinestones reminiscent of a

Second Floor Rooms

Room #1: Presidential Suite (page 64): The largest room in Hotel 96, the Presidential Suite is the location of the séance. This is also the only place the heroes can find cremated human remains for the counter-ritual.

Room #2: Dolores' Room (page 66): Dolores Grey is staying in the Princess Suite. A premonition occurs here, and heroes can find the combination to Vinnie Two-Fingers' safe.

Room #3: The Mysterious Marvin & Esmeralda's Room (page 67): This room holds background information regarding the charlatans running the séance in the Presidential Suite.

Room #4: Do Not Disturb (page 67): A terrifying encounter awaits one of the heroes here.

Room #5: Vinnie Two-Fingers' Room (page 67): If the heroes have the combination from Dolores' diary, they can break into Vinnie's safe.

Room #6, page 67: This room is empty but can be searched to reveal a diary.

Room #7, page 67: This room contains the echo of a hotel guest.

Room #8: Your Room (page 68): Our heroes occupy this room. A search will reveal a few handy items as well as a Bible with blank pages. In the back, the ingredients to the ritual Anders performs are written.

While in their hotel room for the first time, the heroes hear the couple in the next room over having an argument.

When the heroes leave their room for the first time, read **The Mezzanine** (page 64).

Room #9: A Torrid Affair (page 68): A quarreling couple, Richard and Eliza, resides in this room. If our heroes happen to get the door open early in the adventure, they will have a premonition of Eliza dead. Depending on how the party handles Richard, they may be able to save Eliza.

If the room is searched after Eliza's death, they find arsenic (used in the counter-ritual) in the container of rat poison in the wastebasket.

Cargo Elevator (page 62).

Hollywood genie. "Welcome, welcome. Your coming was foretold in the cards. Please enter, as The Mysterious Marvin is about to become a bridge connecting our world to the realm of the afterlife. I, Esmeralda, am your guide."

She raises her hands toward the ceiling and a piece of flash paper in each palm ignites. "Tonight, the Lady Evelyn Montgomery has requested that The Mysterious Marvin perform a séance to contact the late Samuel Montgomery on the anniversary of their marriage 40 years ago—this very day."

"Please follow me. Once The Mysterious Marvin has made his connection he will allow you to ask questions of those who have passed to the other side. Until then, it is imperative that you do not break his concentration or a terrible curse will befall you, your children, and your children's children."

The Presidential Suite is quite large, but the sheer number of tapestries hanging from the ceiling make it

impossible to move out of the living room area. Pillows have been spread around the floor making the space look like the inside of a sultan's tent. Hundreds of candles have been lit, painting the floor and tapestries in dancing shadows.

On the side nearest your group, two extremely well-dressed people look on. One is an elderly woman weeping softly to herself and the other is a man in his late 30s who bears a striking resemblance to the older woman. The man appears to be annoyed and very unimpressed. On the opposite side, the sultan himself—The Mysterious Marvin—sits with his eyes closed on a large red velvet pillow mumbling to himself. In the center of everything, a brass urn sits on a marble pedestal.

The Extras in the room are as follows:

- **The Mysterious Marvin:** A charlatan spiritualist who convinced Evelyn

Montgomery he can contact her late husband for a mere \$10,000.

- **Esmeralda:** Marvin's collaborator and assistant. She is currently behind the tapestries near a bank of ropes tied to mirrors hung in the shadows around the room. When Marvin begins to speak to the "spirit realm" she manipulates the mirrors giving the audience a fairly effective light show.
- **Evelyn Montgomery:** A rich widow desperate to be reunited with her dearly departed husband Samuel Montgomery. She has gone against the wishes of her son, Samuel Jr., and employed The Mysterious Marvin.
- **Samuel Montgomery Jr.:** Son and beneficiary of his late father's estate, Samuel Jr. has a secret. He hated Samuel Sr., and when he found out he was being written out of the will, he orchestrated the hunting accident that ended his father's life.
- **Samuel Montgomery Sr.:** Much to the surprise of all involved (especially The Mysterious Marvin) the ghost of Samuel Montgomery Sr. actually makes an appearance to exact revenge.

The séance begins, and Esmeralda causes shadows to dance around the room. Marvin commands the spirit of Samuel Sr. to enter his body with grand bravado. He makes a great production of gasps and twitches, then drops his head.

Slowly, The Mysterious Marvin lifts his head, fixes his gaze on the large candle in the center of the room, and says in a deep, quavering voice, "I am here. Ask what you will of me."

For the first few questions asked, Marvin is clearly faking the responses, answering each question using information gleaned from previous conversations and research.

After a bit of back and forth, Samuel Jr. stands up and demands that Marvin tell him what Samuel Sr. had for breakfast the morning of his death.

Marvin's eyes turn black. The shadows which were dancing on the walls stop and take the form of wolves surrounding the audience. Marvin floats three feet into the air while

retaining his cross-legged position and stares at Samuel Jr.

"Coffee, black, laced with Laudanum."

The shadow wolves leap from the walls and tear Samuel Jr. to pieces. Evelyn faints.

At this point, pass out cards for Initiative!

- **Mysterious Marvin Sr.:** See page 75.
- **Shadow Wolves (1 per hero):** Use the Dog/Wolf profile from *Savage Worlds*.

Once the physical form of Samuel Sr. (The Mysterious Marvin) and the wolves have been defeated, the candles go out. Moments later, the heroes are in the Presidential Suite with no evidence of Samuel Jr.'s body, the séance, or either of the charlatans. The only thing remaining in the room (besides regular hotel furnishings and amenities) is the urn of Samuel Sr.'s ashes for use in the counter-ritual.

Room #2: Dolores' Room

Room #2 is locked, but can be picked with a successful Lockpicking check. As the heroes enter, a ringing bell echoes in their heads...

Dolores huddles on the chaise lounge in the middle of the room weeping quietly. A large man in a fancy suit stands over her, red-faced and spitting.

"After all I done for ya, you think you're gonna quit? You're gonna sing tonight, you're gonna sing tomorrow, and you're gonna sing every night till you're paid up on that money I sent back to your sister." The room fades to black as the man slams the door exiting, and Dolores sobs into a silk shawl.

Once the premonition fades, the characters are alone in the room. The Princess Suite is the temporary living space of none other than Dolores Grey, the hotel's acclaimed siren. Her closet is filled with fine clothing and accessories and her vanity is covered in dozens of lovely and colorful bottles.

A successful Notice check turns up Dolores' diary in which she talks about coming out to the big city with plans of becoming a star, then hearing about her family's troubles back on the farm. She writes about how she met

Vinnie and hoped he would solve all of her family's problems.

Vinnie had offered to front her some cash, and all she had to do was sing. Vinnie, like any good loan shark, makes sure that the interest accruing on Dolores' loan advances faster than what she pulls in for a show so that she'll stay indebted to him forever. Dolores is onto him, and hints in her diary that she may have found a way out from under his thumb.

The numbers 5-9-8 are written on the back cover of the diary.

Room #3: The Mysterious Marvin & Esmeralda's Room

The room is filled with equal parts empty booze bottles, cheap costume jewelry, and 25 cent magic tricks.

A successful Notice check turns up a significant written correspondence between the Mysterious Marvin and Lady Evelyn Montgomery detailing his requirements for performing the séance (see **Room #1: Presidential Suite**, page 64).

Room #4: Do Not Disturb

As the placard on the door reads, the guest staying in this room should not be disturbed. At least, this is what the placard says at first. If characters converse about what to do about the locked door before them, have them make a Notice check. Success reveals the placard's message has changed to, "If you open this door, you will be sorry."

If the characters leave the area, nothing more occurs. If the lock on the door is picked and opened, to the rest of the party the door swings outward revealing a solid wall matching the rest of the hallway. For the hero who opened the door, however:

The door to Room #4 opens slowly inward, and as it swings into the room it is enveloped by a static vertical plane of darkness. The room within is not simply unlit, but it is completely devoid of existence. A music box begins playing an uneven melody whose notes seem to stretch and melt when they hit your ears. It is a song you remember from your childhood. A song that lives in the space between your nightmares and the world in which you woke up screaming.

To the rest of the party, the hero who opened the door is staring terrified into the wall. When the hero "returns" from his premonition, he also sees nothing but a wall. The one who disturbed the room now has the Hindrance: Phobia (Minor—Fear of the dark).

Room #5: Vinnie Two-Fingers' Room

Vinnie Two-Fingers is the boyfriend/booking agent of Dolores Grey. With significant ties to the mob, his main source of income (bootlegging) is drying up and he is not pleased about it. He's currently in the Laundry Room playing poker (see **Laundry Room: Poker Game**, page 64). His door is locked, and requires a successful Lockpicking roll to open. A search of the room reveals a small combination safe. If the heroes found Dolores' diary (see **Room #2: Dolores' Room**, page 66) they can try the numbers written there. Entering the numbers 5-9-8 opens the safe containing \$2000 in cash.

Room #6

The door is opened with a successful Lockpicking roll. The students find lingerie and a frilly robe in the closet, and a cosmetics kit in the bathroom. On the bed is an almost fully packed suitcase. There is a picture on the wall of a little girl in a field of sunflowers.

The heroes find a journal on the nightstand. Inside are mostly innocent accounts of day-to-day life in the 1930s, but an Investigation check makes one entry stand out:

"I'm leaving tomorrow morning. Something about this place just isn't right. I know it sounds silly, but I could swear the painting in here watches me!"

Room #7

The door to Room #7 is locked but can be picked. Upon entering, the heroes immediately notice the air is a few degrees cooler inside the room than it is in the hallway. It is very dark inside.

Call for a Notice check. Whoever passes momentarily catches a glimpse of a person asleep on top of the bed! The "person" disappears as the door swings into the room.

If the heroes stay in the room to search it or perform any other task, have them make

a Notice roll. Whoever passes this time sees a shadowy human form walk in front of the bathroom door and open the closet.

The moment one of the heroes moves or acts, the form vanishes without a trace.

Any search of the room reveals nothing but regular hotel room furnishings, although it looks like the room hasn't been cleaned in a while.

Room #8: Your Room

When you come to your senses, you are all sitting in a lavishly decorated hotel room. The echo of the night clerk's bell rings in your ears and slowly fades to the muffled sounds of a quarrel taking place in the next room.

If the team pays attention to what's going on next door, they can hear a man and a woman quarreling. The female voice says, "You said you were going to leave her!"

A successful Notice check lets the heroes hear a bit more:

A female voice says, "I'll tell her about us! I'll do it!" and you hear her crying. You hear the man's voice, but it's too quiet to make out the words. It sounds like he's trying to calm her down. You hear a door open and close followed by footsteps going past your door.

If the heroes attempt to catch up to or confront the man walking past their door, they lose him in the crowd of partygoers, and don't see him again until they visit the kitchen (see the **Kitchen**, page 61).

Soon you can only hear pained sobs through the wall, and dimly beyond that, the faint sounds of the party going on in the Grand Ballroom.

If characters wish to investigate the lovers' quarrel, they can go to Room #9 (see **Room #9: A Torrid Affair**, page 68).

Searching the room turns up typical hotel amenities: blankets, pillows, soaps and powders. In addition there is a Gideon Bible and a wall-mounted phone that only calls down to the front desk—though no one picks up—and an antique diamond engagement ring in the nightstand drawer.

Make sure to mention to your party that the Bible has blank pages and conveys no holy bonus against demons/evil. On the last page, written in pen, is the following:

Ritual of Summoning:

- *Frozen Human Eye*
- *Cat Whisker*
- *Brain of Rabid Animal*

Room #9: A Torrid Affair

Richard Dougherty and Eliza Scrump are fighting about their relationship. Eliza wants Richard to leave his wife and marry her. Richard arranged this "vacation" with Eliza as a last hurrah; he wants to end the relationship.

When Eliza threatened to tell Richard's wife about their affair, he decided to poison her.

If the heroes investigate, Richard is gone, and an inconsolable Eliza is in the room but wants to be left alone.

Attempting to Persuade Eliza to talk or breaking down the door arouses the interest of the Demon (see **Provoking the Demon**, page 57).

A successful Persuasion roll at a -2 gets her to open the door. Upon doing so, the heroes hear a bell ding and another shared premonition begins:

Eliza is sprawled across the bed, head hanging off. She is clearly dead, with bloody foam bubbles dribbling from her mouth. On the nightstand is a half-empty flute of champagne.

A moment later, the heroes find themselves standing in front of Eliza, who asks them what they want with her. She doesn't have any additional information for our heroes at this time.

If Room #9 is investigated after characters overhear Richard in the Kitchen demanding the rat poison (see **Kitchen**, page 61) and they do not stop him, they find Eliza's body as described in the premonition above. Have them all make Fear checks.

If the heroes save Eliza, it increases chaos, but characters get a Benny for their good deed.

Upon searching the room, \$30 in cash can be found. Additionally, if Eliza is dead, the rat poison used to murder her is found in the bathroom's wastebasket. The poison's primary ingredient is Arsenic and is suitable for the counter-ritual.

BASEMENT

Regardless of how the heroes find their way into the basement, as soon as they arrive they are met with the stench of burning hair and temperatures hovering around 110° F.

While the team is in the basement, whenever a new room is entered, have players make a Vigor check. Failure causes characters to become Fatigued due to the excessively hot temperature. Only one point of Fatigue is accrued in this way, and once the heroes leave the basement, they recover from Fatigue caused by the heat after 30 minutes' rest.

Ritual Room

If characters reach the Ritual Room before having the three ritual components:

The room you are standing in is one which simply should not exist. It is unlikely Anders designed the room himself, and even more unlikely the building's original designer would have placed it here; but nevertheless, buried deep in the bowels of Hotel 96 lies a ritual chamber. The floor of the room is 60 feet in diameter and perfectly circular, made of polished hematite interspersed with blood-red rust. Carved into the floor is a ritual circle resembling the one found in Anders' journal.

Note: There are two entrances to the Ritual Room. One is a ladder from Anders' room and the other is an old bootlegger tunnel leading from the Wine Cellar.

If characters have assembled the components necessary for the counter-ritual, see **Final Confrontation: Anders** (page 70).

Custodian's Room

Upon entering the Custodian's Room, everyone should make a Fear roll to avoid being nauseated by the scene before them.

When the door to this room opens, a mass of tailless rats melts and scurries into cracks in the walls. Left in the center of the room is a mound of human remains, rat filth, and bedding.

Basement Rooms

Boiler Room: The Rat Catcher (page 70): An extremely disturbing encounter occurs here with the Rat Catcher (along with some rat swarms). This is the only place in the hotel to find rat tails, one of the necessary ingredients for the counter-ritual.

Custodian's Room (page 69): The heroes must pass a Fear roll to search this room, but it contains the custodian's keys which open every lock in the hotel (except for Room #4).

B1: Storage 1 (page 69).

B2: Storage 2 (page 69): This room is mostly full of whiskey. Behind some wine racks there is a tunnel leading to the Ritual Room.

B3: Storage 3 (page 69): Staff uniforms can be found here.

Ritual Room (page 69): Coming to the Ritual Room before assembling the counter-ritual ingredients reveals a ritual circle like the one in Anders' journal.

If heroes have all ingredients necessary for the counter-ritual, go instead to **Final Confrontation: Anders** (page 70).

If a hero can successfully pass a Fear check, a Notice check at a -2 uncovers the custodian's keys: a set of keys to every door in the hotel except for Room #4. There is also a key to the cargo elevator.

B1: Storage 1

This room is unlocked. If searched, this room contains boxes filled with various decorations and room furnishings.

B2: Storage 2

This room is locked. If the lock is successfully picked, the door opens to reveal multiple wine racks and shelves almost completely filled with bottles of whiskey.

If the room is searched, what looks like an old bootlegger tunnel can be seen behind one of the shelves. Exploring the tunnel brings the party to the **Ritual Room**

B3: Storage 3

This room is unlocked. If searched, this room contains shelves with hotel staff uniforms. Behind the uniforms is a half empty bottle

of whiskey. Donning the uniforms allow the heroes to move about the staff area without attracting the notice of Rocco the bodyguard.

Boiler Room: The Rat Catcher

As you approach the large boiler room, the smell of burning hair and the insufferable heat worsens. On top of that, the roar of fire and steam make all but the loudest shouts impossible to hear. The walls are dark, covered in mildew and copper pipe. The floor is difficult to make out, but there's something very odd about it: it seems to be undulating, and rolling toward you.

In the room are three swarms of large rats, all rabid, hungry, and without tails. What lies in wait for the heroes beyond is even more grotesque. In the darkness stands a scarred and tattered husk of a man. He wears a coat of rat furs lined with a fringe made of rat tails.

No longer human, the Rat Catcher attacks once the team has defeated the first swarm of rats. His claws and bite can inflict disease. As he descends on the heroes, he moves less like a man and more like a marionette, lurching and jerking forward.

After taking a wound, it should be made clear the Rat Catcher does not bleed. The damage looks far worse than it is. After suffering two wounds, the Rat Catcher's skin is torn asunder, and it is revealed he was nothing more than a skin suit for a group of dire rats.

Once defeated, anyone on the team can examine the boiler and make a Repair check. If successful, he may turn down the heat and negate the Fatigue-causing environmental effect.

What's left of the Rat Catcher is pulled away by the scurrying remains of the rats except for the ratskin coat and tails. A rat tail can be collected for the counter-ritual.

- **Rat Catcher(1):** See page 74.
- **Dire Rats (1 per 2 heroes):** See page 74.
- **Rat Swarm (3):** See page 75.



FINAL CONFRONTATION: ANDERS

The circle carved into the room is lined with candles which burn with rose-colored flames. The room is glowing, filled with a rusty crimson light. The floor itself acts as a mirror, and ripples when you walk upon it. Looking down, you see the candlelight undulate hypnotically at your feet.

Three stone receptacles around the room's perimeter contain softly-glowing ingredients: a frozen human eyeball, the whisker of a puma, and a brain from one of the rabid rats in the basement. Anders sits in the center of it all, his back to the party, muttering an incantation that matches cadence to the flickering of the candlelight.

When your team has entered the room completely, Anders speaks to all of you while simultaneously continuing his chant. "You are not supposed to be here. Every night we sing the same song and perform the same dance. Every night we burn in hellfire, and every night we serve damnation. You will join us."

Anders stands and faces the heroes, while a ghostly aspect of him remains sitting on the ground muttering to himself.

Anders' ritual continues as the battle ensues. Heroes fight Anders' physical form while his spirit form maintains the incantation. Anders is nigh-invincible while the ritual components he has gathered (the human eye, the cat whisker, and the brain) are still in their receptacles.

Reaching into and emptying a receptacle is an action, and no Trait roll is necessary to perform it. Heroes can also place their own ritual components into an empty receptacles (requiring separate action), although they won't have any effect until after combat when the counter-ritual begins.

Also, each time a receptacle is emptied, the Ritual Room changes. After the first ritual ingredient is removed:

The walls of the ritual room shake and crack. Huge fissures form through which the glow of the Grand Ballroom seeps in. The sound of Dolores' song pushes its way through and fills the room. The physical Anders bellows some arcane word, and the golden light from the ballroom turns amber and crimson as the partygoers begin screaming. The walls shift again, cutting off the red light, and while still broken no light comes through the cracks.

After the second ritual ingredient is removed:

Anders screams again, and grows in size. He raises both arms above his head and howls at the ceiling. The walls shatter and are flung outward into the abyss. The ceiling opens up into a matte black emptiness. The floor extends infinitely in all directions—a rippling, reflective chaos. After a moment, the hands of well-dressed men and women begin reaching up from the surface and grasping onto the heroes, attempting to pull them down into the inky depths.

From this point on, Pace is reduced by 2 for all heroes. If a hero does not move during their turn, they suffer a multi-action penalty of -2 for fighting off the pull of the floor while performing other actions.

After the final ritual ingredient is removed from its receptacle, the heroes must make a Spirit roll or become Shaken.

Anders yells again, shaking the very foundations of reality. The sky is enveloped in a swirling mass of fire, the ground below becomes less reflective and more ethereal. Looking down, you can all start to see a desert sky, endless fields of sagebrush, and the charred ruins of a massive building.

Once Anders is Incapacitated, both physical and spiritual aspects of Anders disappear. The whole of reality is entirely still and silent. The heroes are still in the great

Ritual Ingredients

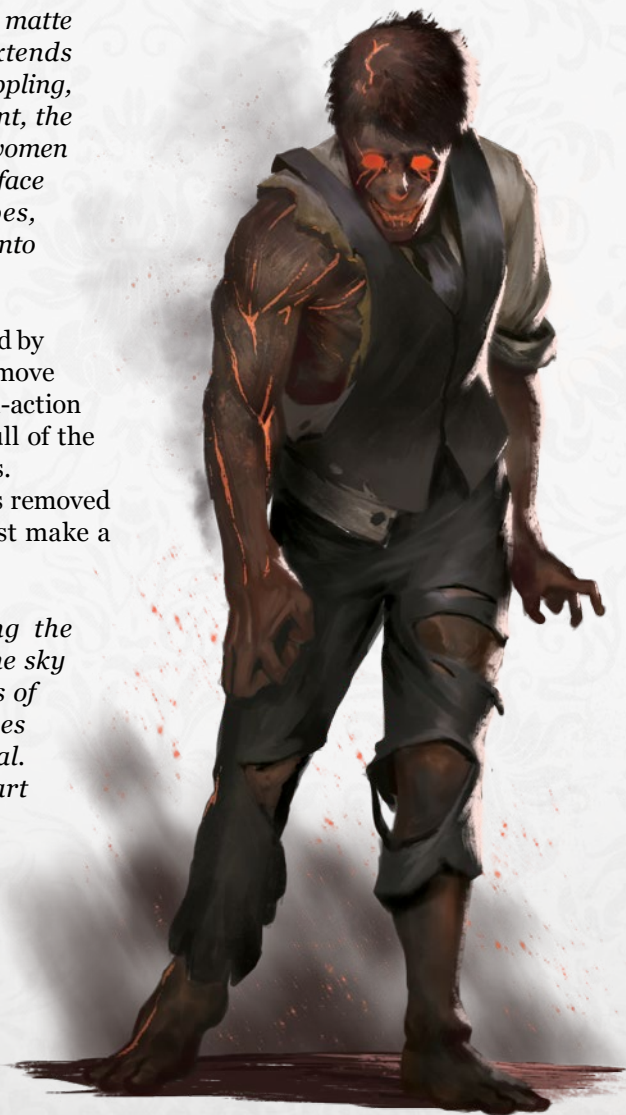
- Frozen Human Eye
- Cat Whisker
- Brain of Rabid Animal

Counter Ritual

- A pinch of arsenic
- Rat tail
- Cremated human remains

hematite expanse, standing on a carved circle. The receptacles are floating steadily without the need for walls to hold them up.

💀 **Anders:** See page 74.



PERFORMING THE COUNTER-RITUAL

Anders' Journal is fairly explicit with respect to summoning and banishing Xezbeth. Heroes do not need the Ritualism skill, and can use the journal and a series of Smarts checks to attempt the counter-ritual. Once all three counter-ritual components—a pinch of arsenic, a rat tail, and cremated human remains—are placed in the receptacles, the heroes must perform the counter-ritual.

This is handled as a Dramatic Task (see *Savage Worlds*), and may be aided by cooperative rolls. If the heroes achieve five successes/raises within the five actions, the ritual is successfully cast. Otherwise the ritual fails, making the chaos demon more difficult to defeat. Performing the ritual successfully or otherwise moves the heroes on to their fight with the demon. Performing a successful ritual makes it much easier to take the chaos demon down, and some of the trapped souls may be able to lend their aid to the team.

FINAL ENCOUNTER: XEZBETH

You utter the final syllables of the incantation, the receptacles aglow. The ambient light around you dims until you are entirely enveloped by silent and utter darkness.

After a few moments, loud, forceful breathing begins.

A massive, vaguely humanoid creature stands before you. Nearly 9 feet tall and impossibly muscular, the demon glares at you. Its eyes ignite, and the sky burns with hellfire.

"Those souls were mine! How dare you take them from me? Fear me mortals, for I shall exact my vengeance!"

You are surrounded by thousands of spirits crying out in agony and pain, and the demon charges forward.

Everyone must make a Fear check. Failure makes the demon stronger (see Xezbeth page 75). Any weapons collected in the hotel are considered pure iron for the sake of fighting the demon.

If the ritual wasn't successful, every time the demon suffers a wound, he summons a pair

of Hellhounds to the battle. With the counter-ritual successfully performed, no hounds are summoned, making for a far easier fight. In addition, as the demon suffers wounds:

If Eliza Scrump was saved:

The spirit of Eliza Scrump stands between you and the beast, and deftly throws a flute of champagne into its horrid face. She laughs as it screams then disappears.

The demon is partially blinded by Eliza's attack, and suffers a -2 to all rolls for the next round.

If Dolores Grey was released from her contract (either by destroying it, or giving it to her):

An angelic song fills the air, drowning out the growls and roars of the demon. You feel invigorated.

Heroes receive +2 to all rolls performed, and their weapons are considered holy for one round.

If the groaning man was healed:

From behind the demon, a strong young man wrapped in bandages walks out through the darkness. He fills the battlefield with bright pure light and disappears.

All heroes recover one wound or level of Fatigue, and are immune to Xezbeth's Fear ability for the rest of this encounter.

☠ **Xezbeth:** See page 75.

• **Hellhounds:** See *Horror Companion*. These are only summoned if the counter-ritual is failed.

When the final blow is struck (regardless of success or failure of the counter-ritual):

As your blow strikes the demon, the world itself seems to howl in pain. From the ground, charred hands claw and rip at the demon's feet, pulling it down, down, down into the abyss. Anders, charred and destroyed, stands between you and the beast. He laughs as the demon wails and descends. The

world turns dark as pitch, and your ears are filled with the ringing of a desk clerk's bell.

EPILOGUE

You see what looks like the beginning of a beautiful sunrise. As you look around, you see that you are standing in the burned remains of Hotel 96. It looks like it's been in ruins for decades.

Surrounding you, a sound starts as a whisper and gets progressively louder. It's singing—very familiar singing—and she sounds ecstatic! All around, you see countless spirits streaming out of the charred husk of a building and into the clear morning sky.

FRIENDS AND FOES

Anders the Night Clerk

This is Ander's living form, the one the heroes check in with at the beginning. He's an unassuming older gentleman, meticulously groomed and manicured while possessing a very welcoming demeanor. Secretly though, he harbors a deep-seated hatred toward the upper class he's served without reward for most of his life.

Note: if the students attack the corpse of Anders in the first premonition, this is the version to use.



Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Knowledge (Hospitality) d8, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Ritualism d8
Cha: 2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5
Edges: Charismatic
Hindrances: —
Gear: None



Anders, Physical Aspect

This version of Anders is the one the team fights in the Ritual Room. An embodiment of physical prowess, Anders has received the gifts promised to him by Xezbeth. Young, strong, fast, and most importantly powerful enough to act on his hatred, Anders is all too happy to try out his newfound abilities on our heroes.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d10, Vigor d10
Skills: Fighting: d10, Notice d10, Stealth d4
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 8
Edges: Brawler, Brawny, Two-Fisted
Hindrances: Bloodthirsty, Overconfident
Special Abilities:

- **Hardy:** Anders does not suffer a wound for being Shaken twice.
- **Infernal Stamina:** Anders receives a +2 to Shaken rolls.
- **Ritual Recovery:** When Anders takes a wound, the glow around one of the receptacles stops. If the receptacle is emptied while not glowing, Anders keeps the wound and the battle continues. At the start of Anders' turn, if any receptacles are not glowing, but have not been emptied, they begin glowing again and Anders recovers from that wound.

Bodyguards

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d8, Vigor d8
Skills: Fighting d8, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7
Edges: Brawny
Gear: Colt 1911 pistol (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1), knife (Str+d4), baseball bats (Str+d4).

Dire Rat (Rabid)

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6 (A), Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Notice d10
Pace: 8; **Parry:** 3; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d4.
- **Berserk:** A rabid animal is automatically berserk and cannot calm down. Parry and Toughness include all modifiers.
- **Disease (-2):** A character Shaken or wounded by a bite attack must make a Vigor roll at -2. On a failure, the victim has contracted rabies. He suffers a level of Fatigue each day until Death. A successful Healing roll can treat the disease, but it must be made within 24 hours and the healer must have access to a large amount of vaccine.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation (see Weakness below).
- **Size -1:** These rats are the size of a large dog.
- **Weakness (Water):** One symptom of rabies is hydrophobia. The creature suffers -2 to all Trait rolls when there is a body of water larger than a kitchen sink within 5".

Gamblers

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Notice d6, Shooting d6
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: —
Edges: Rich
Gear: Knife (Str+d4), Colt 1911 (Range 12/24/48, Damage 2d6+1, RoF 1, AP 1).

Hotel Staff

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Knowledge (Hospitality) d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8
Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: —
Edges: —
Gear: None

Partygoers

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d4, Vigor d6
Skills: Notice d6, Persuasion d6, Taunt d4
Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 5
Hindrances: —
Edges: Attractive, Rich
Gear: None



Rat Catcher

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d12, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d6

Pace: 4; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Arcane Resistance:** +2 Armor against damage-causing arcane powers and +2 on trait rolls to resist opposed powers.
- **Berserk:** as Berserk Edge.
- **Construct:** +2 to recover from being Shaken; No additional damage from called shots; Immune to poison and disease.
- **Fear:** Characters seeing the Rat Catcher must make a Fear check.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation.
- **Slow:** Pace of 4 and rolls a d4 for its running die.

Rat Swarm (Rabid)

The swarm is treated just like a creature. When it is wounded, the swarm is effectively dispersed. Swarms cover an area equal to a Medium Burst Template and attack everyone within every round.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d12, Strength d8, Vigor d10

Skills: Notice d6

Pace: 10; **Parry:** 2; **Toughness:** 9

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Swarms inflict hundreds of tiny bites every round to their victims, hitting automatically and causing 2d4+2 damage to everyone in the template. Damage is applied to the least armored location (victims in completely sealed suits are immune).
- **Berserk:** A rabid animal is automatically berserk and cannot calm down. Parry, Toughness, and damage include all modifiers.
- **Disease (-2):** A character Shaken or wounded by a bite attack must make a Vigor roll at -2. On a failure, the victim has contracted rabies. He suffers a level of Fatigue each day until Death. A successful Healing roll can treat the disease, but it must be made within 24 hours and the healer must have access to a large amount of vaccine.
- **Fearless:** Immune to Fear and Intimidation (see Weakness below).
- **Swarm:** Parry +2; Because the swarm is composed of scores, hundreds, or thousands of creatures, cutting and piercing weapons do no real damage. Area-effect weapons work normally, and a character can stomp to inflict his damage in Strength each round.

- **Weakness (Water):** One symptom of rabies is hydrophobia. The creature suffers -2 to all Trait rolls when there is a body of water larger than a kitchen sink within 5".



Samuel Montgomery Sr.

While possessing The Mysterious Marvin.

Attributes: Agility d4, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Notice d4, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Punch:** Str+d6
- **Corporeal:** While he possesses The Mysterious Marvin he is corporeal and can be affected by normal weapons.



Xezbeth

Chaos demon of legends and lies. He has been inflicting pain and suffering upon the souls of Hotel 96 for nearly a century.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d6, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10 (1)

Special Abilities:

- **Armor +1:** Demonic skin is leathery and hardened.
- **Bane (Holy Items):** Xezbeth cannot attack any character holding a holy item unless he wins an opposed Spirit roll.
- **Claw:** Str+d6
- **Demon:** Immune to poison and disease; +2 to recover from Shaken; half damage from nonmagical attacks except cold iron which does +1d6 more; Shaken and Fatigued by Holy Water if fails Spirit roll.
- **Fear (-2):** In addition to the Fear -2 check, the demon imprints illusions into the victim's mind such as fiery pits, more demons, the end of the world, attacking friends, or whatever else the Dean can dream up. The illusions have no substance and disperse if touched. They last a number of rounds equal to the demon's Spirit die type.
- **Feeding Frenzy:** Every time a human fails a Fear roll in its presence, the demon gains +1 to all Trait rolls, Toughness, and Parry for one hour (maximum of +3).
- **Size +3:** Xezbeth is nearly 9 feet tall.
- **Quick:** When dealt a 5 or lower for initiative, it may discard and redraw until it gets a card higher than 5.

PRE-GENERATED CHARACTERS

These pregenerated characters are provided for use in this adventure. The provided pregens below are Freshmen (Novices) with two advances. All character names are unisex so players may change the gender of their characters without needing a new name.

Taylor (Computer Science Major)

Taylor knows almost everything there is to know about gaming. She even knows the lore behind a handful of MMORPGs. Although Taylor spends most of her time behind a computer and isn't in great shape physically, her reflexes are quick and all of the adventure games she's played have given her practice in finding things that others might miss.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Gambling d6, Investigation d6, Notice d8, Repair d8, Shooting d6, Taunt d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 5; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: Delusional (Major—believes he and his party members are in a video game), Obese, Stubborn

Edges: Jack-of-all-Trades, McGyver

Extracurricular Activity: Gaming (+2 to any Knowledge roll, Including Common Knowledge, concerning lore, myth, and the supernatural)

Gear: Rucksack, Camera (digital), cellular phone, laptop, handheld (video game).

Lindsay (Drama Major)

Lindsay came from privilege, and he can be pretty stuck up sometimes. When starting college at ETU, Lindsay was excited to be cast in *Macbeth*, never guessing that his study of superstition and witchcraft would come in handy one day. He's also been taking fencing lessons to make his swordplay on stage more realistic, which may come in handy.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Investigation d4, Knowledge (Arcana) d6, Lockpicking d6, Notice d6, Persuasion d8, Taunt d6

Cha: +2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Arrogant, Big Mouth, Quirk (Doesn't want to talk to the "help")

Edges: Attractive, Brave, Rich

Extracurricular Activity: Performer (+2 Charisma with young people)

Gear: Handbag, purse, cellular phone, hip flask (engraved), copy of *Macbeth* (early edition).

Alex (Pre Med Major)

Alex is a very serious young lady who cares a lot about her studies and her future as a doctor. She had a rough childhood, and she knows how lucky she is to be at ETU instead of on the streets, and she truly wants to make a difference for those in need. Alex has taken the Hippocratic Oath to "do no harm"...to humans, at least. Her pacifism doesn't extend to demonkind.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Healing d10, Knowledge (Medicine) d8, Notice d8, Persuasion: d6, Streetwise d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Loyal, Pacifist (Major), Vow (Minor—Hippocratic oath)

Edges: Alertness, Luck

Extracurricular Activity: Student Organization (American Medical Student Association: +1 to Healing rolls)

Gear: Backpack, first-aid kit.

Dylan (Physical Education Major)

Dylan is the star of his wrestling team. His grappling skills have no equal at ETU. Even though he owns a gun, he doesn't go shooting very often anymore. In fact, he finds it difficult to focus on anything for very long. He doesn't have the best social skills and can be a tough guy to get along with sometimes, but Dylan is very loyal to his friends and is a good guy to have on your side.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d8, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d4, Shooting d4, Stealth d6

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 6

Hindrances: A.D.H.D. (-2 Notice, +2 to resist Tests of Will), Loyal, Overconfident
Edges: Brawny, Martial Artist, Quick
Extracurricular Activity: Athlete (Wrestling Team: +1 to Strength rolls including damage)
Gear: Backpack.

Billy (Journalism Major)

When Billy started going to ETU, she didn't know that being a Journalism major here was going to be so dangerous. She broke one story early on in her Freshman year that made her the target of a local cult. Billy had always been fast, but now she takes self-defense classes on the weekends...just in case.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting: d4, Investigation d8, Knowledge (Journalism) d4, Knowledge (History) d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d6, Streetwise d8

Cha: 0; **Pace:** 8; **Parry:** 4; **Toughness:** 4

Hindrances: Anemic, Curious, Trouble Magnet (Minor—Inconvenience occurs once per session)

Edges: Fleet-footed, Investigator

Handout: Anders Journal

Extracurricular Activity: Student Organization (*Raven's Report* (school newspaper): +1 to Notice rolls)
Gear: Satchel, analogue camera.

Sam (Fine Arts Major)

Sam always had an eye for fine art...especially for stealing it. A year ago, he broke into the home of a wealthy citizen of Pinebox and was caught absconding with an original Picasso. The rich man saw Sam's potential and decided not to press charges, and instead enrolled him at ETU. Sam is grateful, even though he suspects he is being groomed to become an art forger.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d4, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Knowledge (Art) d4, Lockpicking d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d8, Stealth d8

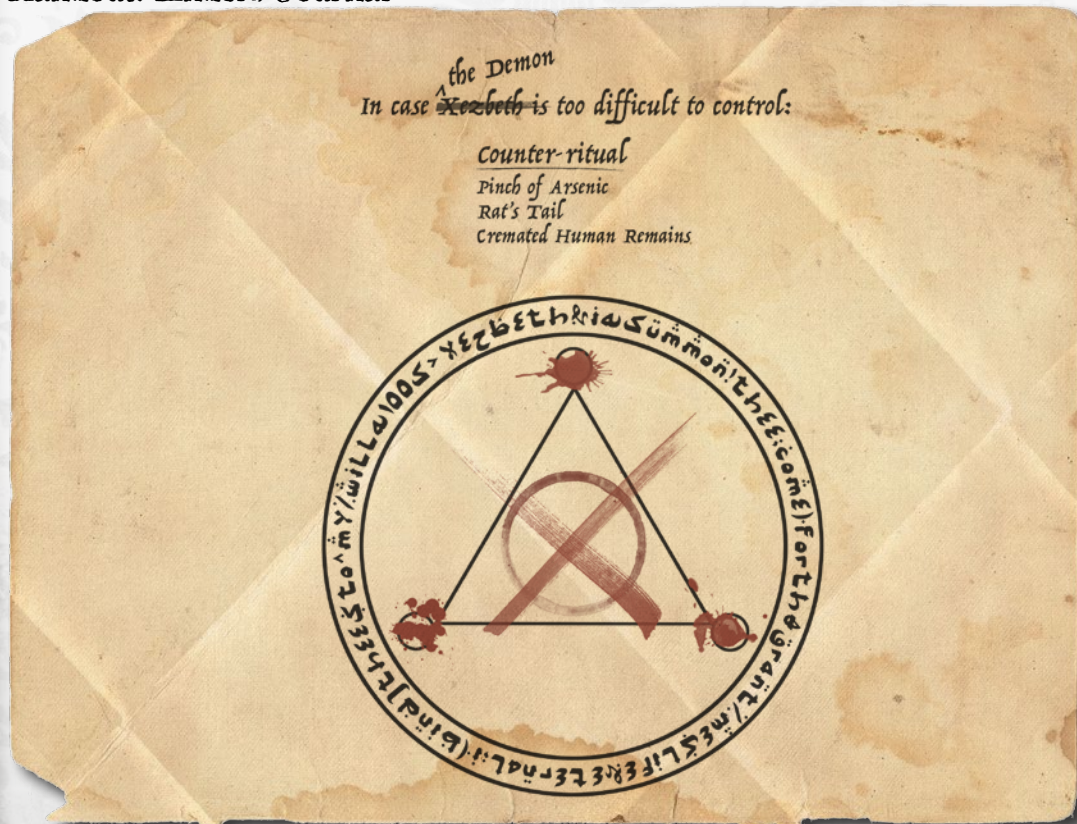
Cha: -1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: Cautious, Habit (Minor—Kleptomania), Yellow

Edges: Alertness, Thief

Extracurricular Activity: Part-time Job (Thief: +1 to Stealth rolls)

Gear: Cellular phone, lockpicks, note pad, pen.





DANCE OF THE DEAD

By Howard Andrew Jones

This is a *Solomon Kane* adventure for veteran level characters or higher set in London and the wilds of Scotland.

While the characters are travelling in the British Isles they learn of a small book that's created a sensation—*Ancient Dances of the English Isles*. They soon learn the dances in the booklet, now being performed throughout England and Scotland, are in actuality an ancient magical ritual, which weakens the barrier between our world and the spirit realm. As the dances grow in popularity, more and more powerful and ancient ghosts are conjured, including Roman legionnaires and monsters from the Pliocene Epoch.

Our heroes discover the text's author is not the Scottish Laird taking credit, but an ancient Pictish sorcerer bent on restoring the land and creatures that roamed Britain when the Picts were a power to be reckoned with. He's completely cracked, of course—the sorcerer can't return any of the creatures, including his own people, to true life, but the rituals render the ghosts more and more substantial, self-aware, and dangerous. Moreover, if the ghosts solidify enough to imbibe blood, they are restored to a ghoulish half-life.

Our heroes must find the Pict wizard's lair on an island in a highland loch, naturally protected by the ghost of an ancient sea monster and half-living Pict warriors, slay the wizard, and disrupt the center of the ritual... before the Isles are overrun with blood-hungry ghosts.

Don't have Solomon Kane?

If you don't have access to the *Solomon Kane* setting, use the following setting rules from *Savage Worlds* and *The Horror Companion*:

- Guts
- No Power Points

If your players are using existing characters, use Spirit in place of Guts. The Magik skill is replaced with Spellcasting and Shamanism with Faith.

Note the currency, in *Solomon Kane*, is in pounds sterling (£).

ADVENTURE REQUIREMENTS

The wanderers of this adventure should have a means for fighting spirit creatures, possess either blessed or magical weapons or have an Arcane Background. Knowledge of or interest in history, dances, or music would be useful from a role-playing perspective, although they aren't a necessity.

Over the course of the adventure the wanderers encounter a variety of phantoms, most of which are more fully materialized than "standard" ghosts. They can be seen by both the wanderers and everyday people, and can inflict physical harm in addition to the usual ghostly damage. Because the damage isn't entirely physical, wounds inflicted by these ghosts heal twice as fast as regular injuries, although at the Game Master's preference, any particularly grievous wound might leave a kind of "spiritual scar" that forever after pains them in the presence of evil spirits.

THE SCHEME OF NECTANOS

In the stories of Robert E. Howard, the Picts are the twisted remnants of a once proud people native to the British Isles and the continent that existed before them. By Solomon Kane's time most Picts are believed extinct, but that's not entirely true. One at least still lives, and he is ages old. His name is Nectanos, and he's convinced an inoffensive Scottish Laird, Ian McDaniel, that he's nothing more than a particularly rich source of ancient traditions and tales.

McDaniel, a near-sighted scholar, has published one collection of legends based upon Scottish fairy tales. It didn't attract much attention. The rather unassuming Scott was astonished by the acclaim he's received upon publication of his second book, *Ancient Dances*. Unbeknownst to him, part of the book's success hinges upon bloody human sacrifices carried out by Nectanos.

Once familiar with the concept of books and printing, the aged Pict immediately grasped how modern technology could be used to carry out a terrible plan. Assisted now by half-substantial Pictish phantoms who must regularly drain blood to remain corporeal, Nectanos believes if

enough rituals are performed, they and the rest of the Pictish people will be returned completely to life. He's wrong, but is unlikely to be convinced by any rational humanitarian pleas. He views all other people as either useful tools or enemies to the Pictish race, and views anyone living in England or Scotland as usurpers worthy of death.

By his estimation, Nectanos has to wait until the next full moon to carry out his plan. If he succeeds in carrying out a complex ritual with the accumulated energy of the dances he will permanently weaken the barrier between the spirit world and the real world throughout the British Isles. The dance fad has already poked "holes" in the barrier, strengthened existing ghosts, and revitalized spirits that were so faded they were completely invisible to all but those without extremely powerful magical gifts.

Ghosts older than a few hundred years are extremely rare, but with the increased power afforded by the rituals, creatures from Pliocene times—such as saber-toothed tigers and cave bears—and Roman soldiers, Celtic warriors, and even a plesiosaur (in a Scottish loch, naturally) have manifested and are striking terror in the countryside.

THE DARK OF LONDON TOWN

The wanderers have arrived in the city of London when they share a dream. As experienced travelers on the Path of Kane, they have heard occasionally from N'Longa before, so they know the familiar signs. A wizened African shaman, N'Longa is spiritual brother to Solomon Kane himself.

As you lie sleeping the normal vagaries of dream fade and you grow fully conscious of the act of dreaming. Images warp and change around you until you and your friends sit once again on a cave floor before a wizened man with leathered skin. He is old, but his eyes burn yet with life and sorcerous power and reflect the dancing flame of the fire around which you all are seated. N'longa has sent his spirit into the dream world to speak with you. He lifts one open palm in greeting.

"N'Longa has had visions of you. The barrier between our world and that of the spirits weakens in the lands you walk. The sorcerer behind hides from N'Longa, but I have felt the strength of his hate, and it is a great one. Seek for spirit signs in the great village and look for spoor to lead you where the sorcerer lairs. His is a house of wood upon waters."

You know that it takes great power and focus to send a dream so far, and you sense that N'Longa's spell is already weakening.

"N'Longa must save his strength to search. I will dream-speak to you again if I see more."

He raises his hand in farewell and then you waken in your beds. Morning has come, and you smell the blossoms of spring and hear bird song and the clatter of the city waking.

THE CREATURE IN THE SHADOWS

Following on N'Longa's dream the heroes are likely to make inquiries about the spirit world with friends, contacts, tavern keeps and the like. They'll learn stories like the following:

Folk have been seein' people what 'av been dead and gone wanderin' down the lanes. My friend John was tellin' me of some soldiers that was marchin', all done up in metal armor that weren't from these times, wearin' helmets that had stiff hairs poking up out of them. They turned an' looked at him an' he could see that they didn't have no faces in their helmets! It was then he unfroze and ran for his life!

Any character with Knowledge (Occult), knows about the "half-life" of ghosts and how rare very old ghosts are, especially if the wanderers have encountered spirits several times or had access to old folk tales.

Other stories:

We were walking down the street at night after we'd had a few rounds. Sure, we were a few sheets to the wind, but we weren't drunk to be seein'

things! I swear by all that's holy we felt somethin' creepin' up behind us like. The hairs were standin' up on my arms. Me and me friend Stu turned and there was a huge black dog trotting behind us. His head came up to me chest, and his eyes were glowin'! He growled at us and started running and I tell you, if we hadn'ta been right in front of me sister's home it woulda got us!

Do you know that there used to be a tavern right over there, on the corner? My grandfather used to sing there with his mandolin. I remember watching him when I was a wee girl. The tavern burned down forty years ago and they put up the candle maker's shop. Well, ever since last week, at night, there's been music and laughter coming from that empty building. My son and I crept over to look through the windows and there was no one there, although we could hear the music clear as day. And I swear it was my grandfather's voice singing—and he's been dead and gone twenty years. That put a fright in me and we ran. We haven't been back since.

Despite the increase in supernatural activity the people of London remain in high spirits because the spring weather is so pleasant. The best lead the characters have is the candle shop, and they can watch it from a nearby tavern, the *Red Ship*, if they're so inclined. They may wish to investigate the streets where other incidents occurred.

Wherever they end up, a pleasant spring evening is drawing to a close. As night falls gently the taverns are alive with sprightly tunes and there seems something almost manic about the joy of the common folk who take to the dance floors. But then winter has been long and hard, and the flowers are freshly bloomed.

Whether they're inside a tavern in the lull between songs or striding down some twisting street, the wanderers hear a garbled, frantic cry for help down a darkened lane. On its heels comes a snarl that sets blood curdling. Characters who've travelled the wilds of Africa might be able to identify the noise (with a successful Common Knowledge roll) as sounding like a great cat, which is odd enough even without there being an additional timbre

to the sound: the source is supernatural. Characters with knowledge of the occult can make an additional Smarts roll to recognize the chilling sound of the growl as otherworldly.

Characters rushing toward the scream see the following:

A middle-aged man in sailor's garb is backing away from a cat large as a deer hound. It ripples with muscles and has two prominent, downward pointed fangs. It exudes an aura of menace, and after the first glimpse it becomes clear that portions of the creature are insubstantial. Its eyes glow an unearthly white as it snarl and turns to face you.

- **Phantom Saber-Tooth:** See page 95.

Aftermath

The characters are unlikely to know what a saber-toothed tiger is, but anyone with successful Knowledge (History), Knowledge (Science), or Common Knowledge roll at -2, is aware England has had no native lions for a very, very long time and the strange ghost cat is like none they've ever heard of. A careful search of the dirty streets reveals footprints of a very large cat that can be trailed only a few yards before they disappear in mid-step. It apparently walked right out of a wall.

The sailor thanks the characters profoundly and offers to buy them a pint at the tavern next door. His name is Paul Mann. The tavern (the *Red Ship*) is full, and there's a pair of musicians (a lute and recorder player) entertaining the crowd (they don't start out playing any songs from *Ancient Dances*.)

Paul hasn't anything to do with the ghostly spirits. He was just in the wrong place at the wrong time, but the characters won't know that. He asks the characters where they're from, buys them drinks, and tells everyone what heroes they are.

I shipped in last week from Amsterdam on the ship Catherine. She's a passenger rig, though we moved some cloth.

I've been hearin' tell of strange things ever since. Offfolks seein' people that 'av been dead for a long while.

If the characters haven't already heard stories about ghosts, you can recount those mentioned above, or have tavern goers chip in with their own tales after Paul finishes recounting his story and the heroics of the wanderers. If your party isn't big on interaction and gathering clues you can move on to **The Dance Begins**, when the band begins to play songs that get people to start stepping through *Ancient Dances*.



My cousin's a watchman. Two nights back he saw a file of men in hooded robes, walking down the street. Thinking they was priests, he walks over to see if he can help them find their way, and that's when he notices he don't see any feet under the robes, which is just floatin' there! He made the sign of the cross, but they just kept on floatin', right through the wall of a building.

That's nothing! Yesterday evening my wife and I were coming back from the market when we heard horses galloping behind us. We turned, and only fifty feet back was this team of black horses pulling a man in a chariot, coming at us full speed. My wife screamed and I pulled her out of the way. They just missed running us down, and I got a good look at the man that was driving that team. Those weren't living horses—You could see through parts of them. And the man that was driving the chariot was done up in Roman armor, I'm sure of it. I've seen pictures. I could see his face, clear as yours, and he looked at me, but he didn't have any eyes! A couple of yards after he passed us they just vanished, and then there was nothing there at all. The whole thing scared my wife so bad she hasn't left the house since.

THE DANCE BEGINS

Eventually the musicians start the tune “Greensleeves” and there's a stir in the tavern. Patrons strike up a complex dance that the wanderers have never seen before. There's something captivating about the movements.

Any character with Knowledge (Occult) has a chance to notice there's something odd about the dance steps. A wanderer with an Arcane Background should be sensitive to the magical energies being generated.

Confronting the dancers, musicians, or barkeep about the sorcerous nature of the music is unlikely to win them any friends, as the dancers like what they're doing and the tavern keep and musicians enjoy the appreciative crowd/increased revenue. If particularly violent exception is raised by the heroes they'll be asked to leave. If they resist,

you may need to remind the characters they're heroes, or resort to the statistics for common people (see **Foes** in *Solomon Kane* rulebook). If the watch is called, they arrest the heroes for being drunk and disorderly, put them in a jail overnight, and fine them £0.25 each.

If the heroes decide to look into the origin of the peculiar dance with more circumspection by talking to either Stu the tavern keep, Pete and George, the pair of musicians, or Catherine the bar maid, they hear something like the following.

- **What is that dance?** *That's one of the new dances. I guess I should say old dances. You know, from that book?*
- **What book?** *You haven't heard of it? It's called **Ancient Dances of the English Isles**. Some Scotsman wrote it, and everyone everywhere's doing the dances now. I hear King James and his court have even taken it up.*
- **Where can I find a copy?** *Any London book stall sells them. I've seen 'em everywhere.*
- **Does anyone here have a copy?** *None of the patrons are big readers. The barkeep thinks he saw one of the musicians reading a copy.*

If the characters ask the musicians about it, George admits he picked it up out of curiosity and has skimmed a little. Reading in depth wasn't really necessary because you can play any old music with the dances. He doesn't have it with him: it's back at his flat. The illustrations are nice and there's some good quips in it. George has one memorized: “*Two brothers lived on a dairy farm. One day the youngest brother left to see the world. He didn't return for a dozen years. When he walked through the door his elder brother asked: “Whar are thoo been?” His brother answered: “Out!”*”

- **What kind of illustrations?** *How to do the dances. There are detailed diagrams and pictures. Although most people don't need the book, they learn from folk that were taught by that Scotsman.*
- **What Scotsman? The fellow who wrote the book?** *I suppose. There's some fellow that came down from the Highlands. He's been making the rounds through the noble houses showing people how to do the dances.*

The servants picked it up and they taught other people and now everyone knows them.

A successful Persuasion roll gets George to retrieve his copy of the book from his flat at double the cost (£0.60); a raise and a free pint means he'll run to get it only charging the wanderers £0.30. (It's a bit of a hassle to grab between sets and he was planning to go by his sweetheart's after he was done playing at the tavern.)

Otherwise they have to wait until the morning to buy a copy or break into a London book stall. Breaking in shouldn't be too difficult (Lockpicking or Strength), although if the Game Master wishes to penalize the characters for acting unheroically or make things more tense he could have a four man patrol from the London watch chase them, using the statistics for City Watch (see page 92)

THE STEPS OF DOOM

At this point the characters have two good leads: visiting Farrow and Sons or tracing down the mysterious Scotsman who's in London teaching dances. They're liable to believe the Scot is the book's author, Ian McDaniel (he isn't—McDaniel is in Edinburgh.)

Given the nature of their discovery the wanderers may be tempted to contact authorities to try to shut down the dances, although anyone of intelligence should perceive that the popularity of the dances with the highest circles of society makes it unlikely they can convince anyone.

After they learn the secrets of the book a second dream from N'Longa should reassure them the key lies not in contacting authorities, but putting a stop to the man behind it all. The next three sections (N'Longa's Return, Farrow & Sons, and The Dancing Scot) may occur in any order, and not all of them may prove necessary depending upon what the characters choose to do.

N'LONGA'S RETURN

At an appropriate night after learning the dark secrets of the *Ancient Dances* book, N'Longa visits the dreams of the characters once more.

The Cursed Book

The book is a slim red hardback with gold lettering on the spine identifying it as *Ancient Dances of the English Isles*, by Ian McDaniel. It's 80 pages total length, with copious illustrations and diagrams, interspersed with the occasional joke or ancient Scottish legend. The primary focus is upon the dance steps. Though complex, the three dances within are clearly explained in a friendly, almost breezy style.

A wanderer with Knowledge (Occult) or someone with an Arcane Background who studies the patterns for an hour or more can confirm these are actually sorcerous rituals. Anyone who examines the dance steps and succeeds with a -4 to their skill roll recognizes the dances actually drain minute amounts of life energy from each participant to power the spell, although a side effect of the ritual is the dancers are rewarded with a mild sense of euphoria.

There is no information about the book's author apart from his name, but the printer, Farrow and Sons, London, is listed upon the title page.

Though he holds himself upright, you can see a weary sag to his shoulders and his eyes are tired. "I had a vision that there were many evil books that make puppets of men, and that you had found one. Tell me of it."

N'Longa shakes his head as you recount the information, and you sense that his fatigue is greater even than you supposed. "Such rituals cannot work unless there is a master stone to absorb their power, as a dry cloth takes in water. N'Long sent spirit far and far again, and looked down upon the land between the waters. A stone stands in its center, where the dark sorcerer gathers power. It grows stronger until the moon next rides high and full.

If you destroy the power of the stone you break the spell and the evil magics.

- **How do we destroy a stone?** Blunt the images carved in its surface, or sunder it. It has mighty protections...

N'Longa's voice falters. "He hears. He knows! Find the dark man and the..."

You hear a cry of rage and N'Longa gestures. The dream breaks apart and your contact with him is severed. Briefly you're in touch with another mind, one seething with visceral hatred, and you're thankful the contact ends, for it's like brushing your hand against a fiery skillet.

No matter how much they wish it or what methods they try, the characters are unable to re-establish contact with N'Longa. They have never before had a sending with the Juju man interrupted, and they may be worried for him.

Linking to the Path of Kane

It's possible to link this tale to another that takes place along *The Path of Kane*. In *The Fading Scent of Gunpowder*, which also is set in London, the ghost of Guy Fawkes might well be strong enough to manifest because of the ghostly rituals taking place in this adventure.

If you wish to connect the two adventures even more strongly, you can change Farrow and Sons to Thomas Crowne, the same printer who appears in *The Fading Scent of Gunpowder* and *Ancient Dances* can be one of several books and pamphlets Crowne has for sale. If Crowne has already met his end in a previous adventure, the printer in this story could be his son.

If the GM is running adventures in England she could foreshadow *Dances of the Dead* by occasionally mentioning the strange dance fad that's spreading through the land. Wanderers might have encounters with strangely resilient spirits during other adventures, such as that from *The Fading Scent of Gunpowder*, along with other ghosts from ancient days that are far more substantial than those the wanderers have encountered before.

FARROW AND SONS

The print shop of Farrow and Sons lies across the river Thames, down a shadowy lane where there are a dozen or more small shops: clothiers, boot makers, a baker, etc. It sits close by the Globe Theatre, and is one of the primary shops where advertising fliers for plays are printed.

The print shop is divided into four areas. The largest is a work floor where there are two large printing presses, scrupulously maintained. Near the back entrance is a doorless storage area for paper reams, shipping crates and other supplies. A small corner of the work floor is sectioned off with a desk beside which is a cabinet with row upon row of 9" by 11" cubbies into which the meticulous Farrow has placed various receipts and correspondence.

The fourth and final area is a small receiving room in the front, divided from the rest of the space by a curtain. This is where Farrow or his eldest son take orders from customers. They also sell a few books over the counter, including copies of *Ancient Dances*, Ian McDaniel's first book, *Folklore of the Scottish People*, a small stack of plays collecting dust by some Shakespeare bloke (*Love's Labours Wonne*), the psalms, and a whole host of sample product (flyers, pamphlets, etc.) to show potential customers. A door along one wall leads to a staircase that ascends to the family apartments above.

Visiting by Night

If the heroes investigate the print shop at night they find it closed and securely locked. There's occasional street traffic, so breaking in through the front door or shuttered windows is a bad idea because of the likelihood of attracting attention. The shop has a back door with a sturdier lock that opens to a wide alley through which the print shop receives its supplies.

Farrow and his wife, daughter, and two sons live above the shop, so within five rounds of noise being generated Farrow and his eldest son descend the stairs to investigate. The Farrow family are fairly sound sleepers, so they won't be wakened short of windows being smashed or a fight breaking out. Blunders on Stealth rolls might send objects clattering.

Any character who studies the cabinet by Farrow's desk for a minute or two and succeeds with a Smarts roll understands that correspondence is upon the left and receipts are upon the right and that they're organized first by date and then by name. A longer search, or a particularly lucky roll, uncovers letters between Laird McDaniel and Mr. Adam Farrow. There's much discussion about royalties and printing costs, although McDaniel seems chiefly concerned that the book is laid out exactly like the Edinburgh edition. There's also mention of an Angus Dunn, McDaniel's hireling who's visiting London to help promote the book and demonstrate its dances to the local gentry.

McDaniel comes across as scholarly and curiously obsequious for someone in the nobility. The most useful nugget of information, of course, is the mention of Laird McDaniel's estate in Scotland, along the banks of Loch Tay. That's north of Edinburgh, and a good 470 miles from London, which is a very long carriage ride. The swiftest way there is to take a ship to Edinburgh, followed by a three-day ride, which barely leaves the wanderers time to reach the estate before the next full moon!

With the information in hand, the characters may well think that they're home free. Unfortunately for them, Nectanos has set guardians to protect the printing facility so crucial to his plans. At an appropriately suspenseful moment his spirit warriors manifest and attempt an ambush. Astute heroes can perceive the sudden drop in temperature as the ghosts appear by making a Notice roll.

- **Pictish Phantom Warriors (2 plus 1 per hero):** See page 85.

Adam Farrow, the printer, descends five rounds after the fight with the ghostly Picts begins (if he hasn't investigated the characters sooner). He sends his younger son, Phillip, out the front for the City Watch, and then he and his elder son Cedric advance to confront the wanderers. Adam carries an old sword and Cedric a carving knife but they stop short when they see the characters fighting ghosts and swiftly back from the room muttering of witchcraft. They flee with Mrs. Farrow and little Deborah. The City Watch arrives ten minutes after their departure with an accurate, if somewhat exaggerated, description of the characters and can be a recurring nuisance to the characters so long as they remain in London (if the Game Master wishes).

Visiting by Day

If the heroes visit the shop during the day they are greeted by Farrow's younger son Cedric, a gangly seventeen year-old in a stained printer's apron eager to showcase the products, types, and fonts. Cedric doesn't know much about the *Ancient Dances* book except that it was written by a Scottish Laird and that it's the fastest selling book they ever printed.

If the characters persist with other questions Cedric asks them to wait and gets his father from the shop floor.

Adam Farrow is a thicker version of the son, with the same long limbs, unruly brown hair, and ink-stained apron. He knows nothing about the larger plan and has no patience for crackpot stories about ghosts, being a practical, God-fearing man. He is appropriately private about any business dealings and is unlikely to disclose what he knows about Laird McDaniel unless the characters are particularly polite or clever, in which case he reveals that McDaniel can be contacted at his estate near Loch Tay. Adam Farrow knows him only through correspondence.

The Scot lord who's teaching folks to dance is a friend of Laird McDaniel, Angus Dunn. Farrow has met him once. He believes Dunn is staying at a posh central London inn, the Gold Lion.

THE DANCING SCOT

Angus Dunn is a bluff, friendly fellow with a bush red beard and a winning manner. He's a natural salesman. He also has the heart of a snake.

Angus is fully aware that he's working for a sorcerer. He's already been well-paid for his involvement and is happy to continue to teach folks the dances because he's been promised a king's ransom by Nectanos (who will never deliver). He doesn't know what the sorcerer is really up to and doesn't care, so long as he stays on his good side, because Nectanos frankly frightens him. Angus doesn't think much of Laird McDaniel, Nectanos' unwitting tool.

The night the characters first learn about dances, Angus is nowhere to be found (he's sneaked away with a lady he charmed) but the next morning making inquiries at some of the more reputable places in town, or talking with Adam Farrow, leads the characters to the inn where Angus stays, the Gold Lion.

When the characters arrive at The Gold Lion Angus' servant is packing his bags for a return trip to Loch Tay via a passenger ship named *Sylvia's Choice*, and he's not particularly happy about it. He's become something of a local celebrity and has had some of the finest meals of his life, not to mention expensive gifts and the company of any number of lovely and eligible women. All of that is at an end, for Nectanos has told him to return to Loch Tay by the full moon or suffer his wrath. Angus has delayed as long as he can, and unless he takes a ship by this evening he won't arrive in time.

Used to entertaining visitors, Angus sends off the servant, receives the wanderers, and immediately begins talking. If there are any attractive female characters he flashes a charming smile. He seems completely sincere. "It's a pleasure to meet you. I'm afraid I'm through teaching dances for the time bein', though, I've been called back home."

Angus dismisses any talk of ghosts or magic dances and suggests that his accusers are joking. If things get heated he grows less polite and calls them daft. If intimidated Angus does his best to keep Nectanos out of his answers because he's been promised death if he talks. Poor Angus is a coward, though, and that dooms him. When intimidated by the characters he caves.

"Och! It's nothing to do with me. This wizard fellow taught me the dances! I know nothin' about his plans!

If asked about the wizard he says, "*He's dreadful. I dare not. I dare not! He promised to kill me if I betrayed him!*"

If forced to talk further, Angus reveals the wizard lives on an island on Loch Tay.

"McDaniel's a fool and knows nothing. The stupid Laird thinks Nectanos is an old hermit! You can tell by looking at him that he's evil..."

The moment Angus mentions Nectanos he seals his fate. This time the sorcerer's chief lieutenant materializes, directing the will of



the nearest ghosts he can find. These happen to be a host of victims from the Great Fire of London. Their first target is Angus Dunn, but they happily attack anyone in their way. They fight until their destruction, and within a few rounds of their materialization their movements set the room afire!

Nectanos' lieutenant has limited free will and evaporates to fight another day if he takes two or more wounds.

💀 **Brule, Servant of Nectanos:** See page 92.

• **London Fire Ghosts (2 plus 1 per hero and Angus):** See page 92.

Angus Aftermath

The commotion caused by the battle with the ghosts draws attention. Witnesses are confused and unless the wanderers were incredibly lucky or attentive, the room's ablaze and the fire has already spread into the hallway. As smoke fills the corridor and the flames rise, the

only safe way out is through the window and the drop to the street, two stories below. It's possible to climb down, and convenient signs and small awnings offer support for acrobatic characters. Unfortunately, the City Watch has just turned up.

- **City Watch (2 plus 1 per hero):** See page 92.

Run a standard five round Chase. The wanderers are now wanted for questioning about witchcraft, murder, and arson!

Complications: Obstacles include three pairs of men crossing a narrow street with heavy barrels of tar, small children playing a chase game in the street, a rickety, man-high fence in the middle of an alley that must be climbed, an old sway-backed horse that doesn't want to move out of the middle of the road, a territorial dog gnawing on a bone that growls and barks loudly unless given more food, a slick span of wet, muddy cobblestones, or whatever else is challenging and amusing.

The guard gives the characters a good run for their money, but the wanderers should be allowed to outfox the Extras after a harrowing chase.

THE WAY TO LOCH TAY

The swiftest way to Loch Tay starts with a ship journey to Edinburgh, a trip of about four days if the weather's fair. The vessel Angus Dunn planned to sail is *Sylvia's Choice*, a stout passenger rig that goes up and back to Edinburgh several times a month. The ship's full up because Angus is still registered as a passenger.

If the characters have already met Angus (and witnessed his death) the captain can be convinced to take on the heroes if they agree to pay for Angus' luxuriant cabin. The ruddy, beady-eyed Captain starts by asking for 10 pounds, but can be talked down to 7 pounds if the wanderers are particularly clever.

ANGUS LIVES?

If the characters haven't met Angus, they'll swiftly learn that the ship's full up and gossip on the dock has it that the famous dancing Scott is aboard. Clever heroes who wish to

speak with Angus might coax him off for a drink as the ship is making final preparations, with similar results to those detailed in **The Dancing Scot** (page 85).

If Angus is alive and on the ship, matters could go horribly awry. He'll gladly entertain them in the small but richly appointed two-room cabin. Questioning him aboard ship results in the ghostly attack described in **The Dancing Scot** (page 85) and the invasion of the ghosts sets the ship afire, leading to the Chase detailed in **Angus Aftermath** (page 86).

Providing the wanderers escape accusations of witchcraft or the city watch or both, by making inquiries they learn of a smuggler's ship, *Jenny*, sailing north around ten bells at night. That's the only other ship to Edinburgh leaving *today*. Getting aboard without getting knifed will require shrewd bargaining with the shifty captain, Douglass Devon, and his suspicious and surly crew—although the price for travel is a lot cheaper (£4.00) than *Sylvia's Choice*. Jenny's accommodations are almost non-existent. Characters have to sleep on deck in whatever bedding they have with them.

THE HAUNTED ROAD

Whether they travel in the well-appointed (but still cramped) cabin aboard *Sylvia's Choice* or the deck of *Jenny*, the characters make good time to Edinburgh and arrive in the early morning five days later. Edinburgh's a sprawling, ancient city, surrounded by rolling hills and uplands, including craggy Castle Rock, from which the famed fortress of Edinburgh Castle looms over the city.

The excellent weather prevails—heather blooms on the highland hills—but that's about the only spot of luck the wanderers get. It's a hard three day's ride to Loch Tay. Horses must be purchased or a carriage must be hired. But apart from the mundane details, now that they've returned to land, Nectanos is aware of the wanderer's movements. He has no intention of letting them reach him before the full moon.

From the point they arrive in Edinburgh to the moment they finally reach the stronghold of Nectanos, the heroes observe foreboding signs that the wall between the real world and that of the spirit realms is increasingly fragile. Play up on this as they journey. First, they hear songs and the stamp of dancing feet coming from every tavern they pass. Exhausted but blissful

looking people stagger from inns, flush with the joy of the dance.

Moreover, as the wanderers ride there's increasing evidence of the supernatural, even during broad daylight. Spread encounters like the following out over the course of the next three days.

- Ghostly hounds chase after a trio of phantom women.
- Wispy images of dying bandits hang at crossroads.
- Insubstantial carriages race past them on the road.
- Emaciated, long-dead murder victims stumble out from a bog.
- Knights in full plate gallop past, pennants waving, their heads missing.
- A small army of highland clans wage battle against another in an empty field.

None of these ghosts perceive the characters and are too distant to become threats (there are plenty of those coming up!). If the characters pursue them they fade into nothingness.

PHANTOM DAYS

Directions to the Laird's estate remain vague. As is the way, people tell the wanderers to follow the main road north to Killin and to ask further directions when they arrive. The Laird's castle is on the Loch, but so are several others.

The first day of travel is uneventful, and first time visitors to the Highlands are astonished by the stark beauty of the landscape. That night the wanderers sleep fitfully, sensing that someone is peering at them through the dreamscape. They must make a Vigor roll or suffer a level of Fatigue. The Fatigue lasts until the Wanderer gets six hours of rest.

The evening of the second day, as the shadows grow long, they see a roadblock under the trees ahead. Armored men await them. These aren't soldiers of the queen, but soldiers of the emperor. The ghosts of Roman legionnaires stand guard with orders that none are to pass. Even if none of the characters speak Latin, the soldiers' meaning should be



clear. These men died following orders more than a thousand years ago and they're ready to do so again, quickly taking umbrage at the "barbarian locals." A shadowy figure behind the legionnaires urges them to attack even if the wanderers try to negotiate. This is none other than Brule, who's been dispatched by his master to lead another band of ghosts.

This time Brule fights to the death!

If the wanderers attempt to ride through the blockade, the legionnaires (and Brule) follow on eerie, tireless horses with glowing eyes.

☠ **Burle:** See page 92.

• **Legionnaire Ghosts (3 plus 1 per hero):** See page 93.

• **Ghostly Steed (3 plus 1 per hero):** See page 93.

Should the wanderers gallop more than a mile beyond the roadblock, Brule and the legionnaire ghosts will disappear until nightfall, when they will attempt to sneak up on the camp during one of the watches. They'll

be hard to spot in the thick fog, (-2 on Notice rolls) but there will be no missing the palpable sense of dread as they attempt to sneak into position to surround the characters.

NECTANOS' OFFER

Nectanos has expended a terrific amount of energy fighting and tracking the wanderers, and he's lost his most powerful minion, Brule. Though terrible at compromise he's reluctantly decided to try a different tack with the heroes rather than waste more resources fighting them. While the characters sleep, he contacts them in their dreams to make them a final offer.

If the wanderers are proper heroes one or more of them is on watch when Nectanos visits. Let only the sleeping wanderers hear the offer and face the aftermath.

Once again your individual dreams fade and you meet in a dream cavern. The sensation is familiar enough, but the environment is different. The cave is smaller, the shadows longer, the fire feeble and spiritless. The man across from you is ancient, yes, but he's a small gnarled man with long white hair pulled back from his high forehead. His cruel twisted mouth opens in parody of a smile and he turns gleaming eyes upon you.

If the characters attack Nectanos on the instant, he immediately vanishes and sends Dream Leeches against them. Otherwise he addresses them with grudging respect.

"You have been brave foes, or I would have no words for you at all. This is not your fight. These are the lands of my people, not yours. Leave them and you may depart unharmed."

Allow the wanderers to ask Nectanos some questions:

- **Where is N'Longa?** *That old fool? I know not, nor do I care.*
- **How is Laird McDaniel involved? Why should you care about that one?** *He's of no consequence.*
- **What do you intend to do?** *These are the lands of my people! The Romans and the Angles and the Danes hunted them like*

dogs 'til there was nothing left but memory and mist. Come the full moon, I will have the power to bring them back. All of them. The Picts shall once more rule the highlands and stalk the moors. We will tear down the Roman cities and drive their descendants into the sea! Leave these lands, or be swept away with the rest of the detritus!

- **We will hunt you down and stop you.** *Then I will kill you!*

Nectanos has no interest in talking with the wanderers for very long. It takes sorcerous energy to do so, after all, and he wants to retain as much as possible for the big ceremony. He can wax a little longer about the glory of his people if the wanderers really get him going, but once he understands that there's no deal he flashes a cruel smile and vanishes. In his place rise Dream Leeches.

If these wanderers are part of a long-standing campaign, then the Dream Leeches are images of fallen friends, comrades, or innocents lost to them over previous adventures, or vanished friends, lovers, or relatives from their background stories. If these are newly created characters, ask the wanderers who they've lost or miss, or invent them yourself.

In either case, there's one Dream Leech for each wanderer, and they talk to the heroes as they stumble close, twisting the circumstances of their deaths to blame their listeners.

Fully awake wanderers witnessing a friend under attack by a Dream Leech see frequent and violent movements and hear their friend moaning in pain. They can attempt to waken their friend, who must save on Spirit at -2 to come around.

- **Dream Leech (1 per sleeping hero):** See page 93.

Once the wanderers awaken from their encounter with the Dream Leeches, Nectanos is through with them for the time being. He conserves the rest of his spiritual energy for the big ceremony, and for a final confrontation with the heroes.

THE MANIC VILLAGE

The wanderers reach the small village of Killin on the shores of the narrow Loch Tay just as evening falls. The Loch's surrounded by mountains, vaguely observable as darker

patches against the deeper black of the night. One of Scotland's highest mountains, Ben Lawers, broods far to the north.

There's frenzied dancing underway at the village inn (The Killin Hotel) that has overflowed into the streets. Ominously there are bodies lying here and there, some collapsed in exhaustion and others stone dead. No one's willing to talk about anything but the dance, and they do their best to drag the characters in, going so far as to try to pull them from their mounts or drag them from their carriage. Wanderers dragged close enough to the music must make a Spirit roll at -2 or join the dance! (Characters who are deaf are unaffected.) Their comrades can pull them free, but until their afflicted friend's are at least a hundred feet from the music those infected with the desire to dance resist with full strength! (They can attempt to regain their willpower with a Spirit roll at -4.)

A local priest, Father Douglas, is holed up at Killin's little church, complete with a small band of fearful villagers. The candlelight of their vigil is visible through the shuttered windows. If the heroes need help, he will come to their aid (he's a stout old fellow and slightly hard of hearing, which renders him immune to the lure of the music). He'll also open the doors if the wanderers come to the church on their own.

Father Douglas tells the heroes that Laird McDaniel's home is another half hour on around the lake. He's seen Nectanos, and heard from him in a dream. *"He promised me that all my flock would perish this night, and that Our Lord and Heavenly Father had abandoned us!"*

If the wanderers present themselves as heroes sent to combat the evil, Father Douglas declares them heaven sent and promises to guide them to the Laird's holding, and the strange, man-made isle of Nectanos.

As the skies darken, fog rises, and a misty rain falls on the wanderers as they ride on into the darkness. After twenty minutes they see they could have found their way even without a guide, for the Laird's lakeside fortress is aflame—at least the wooden portions. As the heroes ride up to investigate they discover the Laird's servants lying dead in a circle near the shore, the ground trampled around them (a wanderer who spends a little time looking at tracks can surmise that they've literally danced themselves to death). Father Douglas identifies

the Laird himself lying beside a sword down by the shore. He's a slight, middle-aged man, stabbed through the heart, his face frozen in a rictus of horror. It looks as though he decided too late to take action.

Father Douglas

If the wanderers need extra help, Father Douglas can accompany them. His faith acts as a shield against the darker powers and enables him to channel magical energy to combat spirits. (He has, in essence, been awakened as a spell caster.)

Father Douglas

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Notice d8, Shamanism d8, Swimming d6

Cha: +1; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances—:

Edges: Arcane Background (Shamanism), New Powers, Strong Caster

Powers: *Banish spirit* (banish from *Savage Worlds*), *deflection*, *smite*, *spirit ward* (barrier from *Savage Worlds* but only affecting ghosts)

Gear: Short Sword (Str+d6).

THE CRANNOG OF NECTANOS

A quarter mile out upon the foggy lake is a strange structure, a man-made island that Father Douglas says is the Crannog of Nectanos, visible because of eerie blue light outlining the structure, not to mention the ghostly light beaming out of the smoke-hole in its center and shining on the clouds above. (This is a big clue that the mystic stone used by Nectanos to gather magical energy sits at the crannog's center.)

Father Douglas tells them that Crannogs are ancient structures (They used to be common upon Loch Tay back in Pict days). Now there is only this one, a vast oval dock with a circular building at its center with an immense, sloping roof that rises to a peak mirroring the mountains that ring the Loch.

This is the lair of Nectanos, who's used both manpower and spiritual energies to build the

structure up from a low-lying reef. Wood is the primary construction material. Unlike standard crannogs, Nectanos' is unconnected to the mainland. Anyone wishing to visit him must travel by boat, and there's one still moored to the Laird's dock, just large enough to accommodate the wanderers.

Unfortunately, there's something out there in the water between the wanderers and the Craddog, a ghostly Plesiosaur. Use the foggy, misty conditions to have it play with the characters before it's entirely clear what the monster is. Wanderers are at a -4 to Notice the monster with any specific details until it's at Short range. It tries to rock the boat several times before its serpent-like head looms hugely out of the water. And remember that it exudes palpable fear!

☠ Ghostly Plesiosaur: See page 93.

If the wanderers reach the Crannog via boat, they can dock beside a similar boat at the short pier. Otherwise they must climb up the slick wooden pylons. There's only one entryway, glowing dully with the silvery fire encasing the dolmen (the stone that N'Longa mentioned). Nectanos seems to have begun his ceremony early, for there is the sound of chanting, echoed by a ghostly chorus of voices that sends chills up your spines. The dead are helping him work his magic.

Frontal Assault

There is little to be found inside the Crannog apart from a low bed along one side beside a battered chest, a standing stone erected in the center, and a whole slew of glowing Pictish ghosts, all of them chanting. Nectanos is on the other side of them, conducting the phantom chorus as he wields his spell before the man-high stone. The dolmen is carved with a line of twisted characters in no known tongue that are the color of freshly spilled blood.

Nectanos cannot be interrupted in his work and is loath even to send his Pictish ghosts to run interference (he needs them to help chant). He throws up a *barrier* of bone to protect



himself and sends only one ghost per wanderer at first, then more if those are defeated.

If things begin to look too bleak for the characters, a small band of Highland ghosts (with stats identical to those of the ghost Picts) can join them to help stem the tide.

Fortunately for the characters, Nectanos can't turn his full wrath upon them!

Once things go terribly wrong for him, Nectanos, enraged, shape changes into a bear, and wades into battle to the death, trying to take at least one of the wanderers with him. He'll eagerly swim in bear form to confront them as well.

☠ Nectanos: See page 94.

FINAL STEPS

Assuming Nectanos is dead and the magic of the stone is destroyed, his threat and that of his magic is over. The new fad dies quickly after hundreds of people fall sick from exhaustion

Other Approaches

The characters might decide on a more subtle approach to destroy the stone or interrupt the ceremony. They must naturally make Stealth roles to approach. Those within the crannog are chanting pretty loudly and are at a -4 to observe any intruders. If the wanderers set anything on fire, though, Nectanos gets a Notice roll for every round until the fifth, at which point he notices automatically.

If the characters are detected, Nectanos sends one ghost per wanderer to deal with them. They'll sink right through the planks to confront them beneath, or step through the walls to fight them on the deck surrounding the crannog.

Cutting the Supports: Wanderers might try sawing through the pylons holding up the crannog, which is time consuming but could work if well planned. Give characters with the appropriate background a Smarts roll to cut the sawing time in half from 30 rounds to 10. Wood on the crannog's underside is

sufficiently high off the water that it's not wet. Sawing is noisy, but then so is the chanting within the crannog. Sentinels will be at a -4 to hear the efforts, although they should get a chance to detect every 5 minutes.

Burning the Crannog: Ten rounds of burning will see the Crannog consumed in flame, although ghosts will begin dropping down through the flooring after the first round.

Burning the Struts: Characters particularly sensitive to spiritual energy (such as Father Douglas) can detect the mystic stone lies at the center of the crannog. Burning the support struts at the appropriate location takes a Smarts role and cuts the time between the start of applying flame and the destruction of the floor down to 8 rounds. If the stone plunges into the water its power immediately goes dormant and the plans of Nectanos fail (The markings must still be obliterated, as N'Longa told them, for the stone's power to be destroyed.)

the night after manic dancing grips the nation (dozens more perish). After the public backlash, copies of the book are burned. N'Longa visits the characters a final time in their dreams, weary but pleased, to tell them they have vanquished a great and terrible foe, and if they have merited such, even offers a rare word of praise.

FRIENDS AND FOES



Brule, Servant of Nectanos

This brutish ghostly Pict manifests fully upon the material plane, limned in a silvery light. Naked to the waist, his hulking, muscular body is covered in twisting tattoos. He wields a large spear.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d10, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Notice d6, Stealth d8

Cha: -4; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 9; **Toughness:** 8

Hindrances: Mean, Ugly

Edges: Block, Brawny, Combat Reflexes, Frenzy, Improved Nerves of Steel, Mighty Blow, No Mercy

Gear: Spear (Str+d6, +1 Parry, Reach 1, 2 Hands).

Special Abilities:

- **Fear (-2):** Brule cause Fear checks at -2 for anyone gazing upon him.
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor. This damage is in addition to any damage it deals when corporeal.
- **Physical Attacks:** Unlike most ghosts, Brule is fully material!

City Watch

These men are clothed in cloaks and hats and sturdy clothing. They're brave and competent, but aren't likely to jump rooftops or charge into a field of blades to get their quarry.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d6, Spirit d6, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d6, Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d6, Shooting d8, Stealth d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Gear: Shortsword (Str+d6), dagger (Str+d4), pistol (Range: 5/10/20, Damage: 2d6+1), shot & powder (10).

Dream Leech

These psychic vampires invade dreams, assuming the ghostly image of someone known to their target, twisting their target's memory in an attempt to make them believe they were responsible for the image's death or accident. They prey upon fear, confusion, and despair. Once their targets are staggered they close in and touch them, inflicting chilling damage as per ghostly touches. Heroes facing dream leeches in the dreamscape use their Spirit statistic for all Agility and Strength rolls.

Wanderers witnessing a friend under attack by a Dream Leech will see frequent and violent movements and hear their friend moaning in pain. They can attempt to waken their friend, who must roll on Spirit at -2 to come around.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d8, Spirit d10, Strength d6, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d6, Intimidation d8

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Fearless:** Dream Leech's are immune to fear and Intimidation.
- **False memory:** Dream Leeches recount or twist existing memory's to invoke emotional pain and distress. Dream Leech's launch this attack with an opposed Spirit roll, and if they succeed their target suffers a level of Fatigue. This can lead to Incapacitation but not death.
- **Ghostly Touch:** A Dream Leech's touch is soul-chilling cold. If it succeeds on its Fighting roll, it does damage equal to its Spirit against a character.



Ghostly Plesiosaur

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d12+2, Vigor d10

Skills: Fighting d10, Guts d8, Intimidation d10, Notice d8

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Bite:** Str+d8
- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Fear checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen, and this creature is definitely visible!

- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor. This damage is in addition to any damage it deals when corporeal.

- **Physical Attacks:** Unlike most ghosts, the plesiosaur is fully material!

- **Rock the Boat:** The plesiosaur will attempt to attack the boat and knock passengers into the water. Use its Strength against the wanderer piloting the boat. If the plesiosaur strikes the boat with a raise, the characters must roll Agility or be thrown from the boat. Give the player characters a bonus for each additional character who has the Boating skill.

- **Size +3:** Plesiosaurs are colossal apex predators even in death!

Ghostly Steed

These phantoms are almost entirely insubstantial and can be seen only as wispy horse-like shapes—apart from their silver eyes. Phantom steeds always appear mounted, and any fear generated is dependent on their rider.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d6, Strength d12, Vigor d6

Skills: Guts d8, Fighting d6, Notice d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 7

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** The phantom steeds are immaterial and cannot affect the physical world.
- **Fleet Footed:** The phantom steeds roll a d8 when running instead of a d6
- **Size +2:** The phantom steed is size of a normal horse.

Legionnaire Ghosts

Garbed in bronze corselets over red woolen clothing, red crested helms and leather and knee-length leather kilts, these grim and purposeful phantoms pursue any who resist with implacable purpose. They're armed with both short sword and pilum (use javelin stats). And they are entirely corporeal. When destroyed, they fade into vapor.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Battle) d4, Notice d4, Throwing d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 7; **Toughness:** 9 (3)

Edges: Block, Quick Draw

Gear: Plate corselet (+3), plate vambraces (+3), plate grease (+3), full helm (+3), short sword (Str+d6), medium shield (+1 parry), javelin (Str+d6, Range 6/12/24).

Special Abilities:

- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Fear checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen, and this creature is definitely visible!
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor. This damage is in addition to any damage it deals when corporeal.
- **Physical Attacks:** Unlike most ghosts, the Legionnaire ghosts are fully material!

London Fire Ghosts

Ghostly wounds distort and scar the faces of these milky white ghosts. Their clothes are visibly charred, and they're wreathed in blue flame. They fight to their undeath, vanishing in a whirl of blue energy when they're destroyed.

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 5

Special Abilities:

- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Guts checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen, and these terrifying phantoms are definitely visible!
- **Ghostly Flame:** If the ghost's attack gets a raise, blue flame "burns" its foe for +1d10 bonus damage instead of +1d6, and the target may catch fire (see *Savage Worlds*).
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds on its Fighting roll, it does damage equal to its Spirit if it brushes against a character.



Nectanos

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Fighting d6, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d10, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Cha: -2; **Pace:** 6; **Parry:** 5; **Toughness:** 5

Hindrances: —

Edges: Arcane Background (Sorcery), New Powers, Strong Caster

Powers: *Barrier, deflection, environmental protection, fear, grave speak, shape change, spirit ward, summon spirit, spirit quest*

Gear: Short Sword (Str+d6).



Nectanos the Bear

Attributes: Agility d6, Smarts d10, Spirit d8, Strength d12+4, Vigor d12

Skills: Fighting d8, Guts d10, Intimidation d8, Knowledge (Occult) d12, Magick d10, Notice d8, Swimming d6

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 10

Special Abilities:

- **Bear Hug:** With a raise, a hit pins the bear's victim to be bitten and clawed. The victim can attempt to escape the "hug" on his action with a raise on an opposed Strength roll.
- **Claws:** Str+d6
- **Size +2:** This monstrosity of a creature stands 8' tall and weighs over 1000 pounds.

Pictish Phantom Warriors

These ghostly Pictish warriors can manifest fully upon the material plane. They fight to their undeath, disappearing into smoky gray ash when they're destroyed.

Attributes: Agility d10, Smarts d4, Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d6

Skills: Climbing d8, Fighting d8, Guts d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Stealth d10

Pace: 6; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Gear: Short sword (Str+d6).

Special Abilities:

- **Ethereal:** When the creature is ethereal (see below) it is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or truly courageous heroes. A hero can attack the spirit with his bare hands (not with weapons), by using his Guts skill in place of his Fighting skill. All modifiers associated with Fighting apply to Guts for this purpose.
- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Fear checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen, and this creature is definitely visible!
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor. This damage is in addition to any damage it deals when corporeal.
- **Partly Ethereal:** Unlike "common" ghosts, this spirit is sometimes corporeal. When the spirit draws a Red card for Initiative, it has physical substance, and the spirit loses its ethereal special ability until its next action.

Phantom Saber-Tooth

A ghost who can interact with the physical plane, the phantom saber-tooth hungers for life energy, which it can obtain by slaying its target. Once it has slain a victim, it vanishes.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d4 (A), Spirit d10, Strength d8, Vigor d8

Skills: Guts d8, Fighting d8, Intimidation d10, Tracking d10

Pace: 8; **Parry:** 6; **Toughness:** 6

Special Abilities:

- **Bite/Claw:** Str+d6
- **Ethereal:** When the creature is ethereal (see below) it is immaterial and can only be harmed by magical attacks or truly courageous heroes. A hero can attack the spirit with his bare hands (not with weapons), by using his Guts skill in place of his Fighting skill. All modifiers associated with Fighting apply to Guts for this purpose.
- **Fear (-2):** Ghosts cause Fear checks at -2 when they let themselves be seen, and this creature is definitely visible!
- **Ghostly Snarl:** This ghost's snarl causes a Guts check at -2. It can snarl as an action.
- **Ghostly Touch:** A ghost's touch is soul-chillingly cold. If it succeeds at a Fighting attack, it does damage equal to its Spirit. The target gets no benefit from nonmagical armor. This damage is in addition to any damage it deals when corporeal.
- **Partly Ethereal:** Unlike "common" ghosts, this spirit is sometimes corporeal. When the spirit draws a Red card for initiative, it has physical substance, and the spirit loses its ethereal special ability until its next action.



It's a most marvelous maneuver, certain to elicit delight from all who witness it. Simply lift the right leg and shake it vigorously while at the same time stretching the neck, to right as well. Upon the downbeat, raise your right arm and spin your wrist three times, widdershins.

At the completion of this maneuver, the dance is complete. Step back once, bowing low to the center of the dance floor before mouthing this phrase from long ago days that celebrates the glory of our island home: "Yagkoolan yok tha, xuthalla!" It is quaint, is it not? But then folks of old times didn't have our sense. Or our sense of pronunciation!

Now bow to the partner on your left, then to the partner on your right. The dance is through.

The Dance of Kahulo

This dance is said to range from an island now lost beyond Land's End, where brave cousins of our own once lived, in the time before the coming of the Romans. They taught it to our forebears, but the Romans didn't care much for it, for most of those who came to our lands were grim soldiery types and didn't approve of their subjects enjoying themselves!

PINNACLE
ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

FAST!
FURIOUS!
FUN!



SAVAGE
WORLDS

Your unit is stranded on an **Isle of Death** where Nazis don't just come for you, they don't stay dead!

The shards of a Witch's soul is written in **The Final Page** of an ancient tome of evil. Who else can stop this terror but you the Accursed, those who are witchmarked themselves!

A deep space distress call reignites a bitter eons-old war between two deadly adversaries, intent on drawing you into their conflict, or to **Just Hear You Scream!**

Hotel 96 is waiting for you. It promises fine music, great food, and a release for the soul...but it has a burning desire to make you stay for good!

Ghostly aspirations roam old London town...while a dancing craze causes death by euphoric exhaustion. Who will survive **The Dance of the Dead?**

Isle of Death may be used with the Weird War II setting. The Final Page may be used with the Accursed setting, available from www.meliiorvia.com. Hear You Scream may be used with The Last Parsec setting. Hotel 96 may be used with the East Texas University setting. The Dance of the Dead may be used with the Savage World of Solomon Kane setting.

Savage Tales of Horror requires the Savage Worlds core rules and Savage Worlds Horror Companion.